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*General View, looking to the Bosphorus from  
Stamboul.*



# CONSTANTINOPLE

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## The City of the Sultans

BY

CLARA ERSKINE CLEMENT

AUTHOR OF "NAPLES, THE CITY OF PARTHENOPE," "THE QUEEN  
OF THE ADRIATIC," "HANDBOOK OF LEGENDARY  
AND MYTHOLOGICAL ART," ETC.

Illustrated

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## Part First.



# CONSTANTINOPLE BEFORE THE CONQUEST OF THE OTTOMAN TURKS.

Behold Constantinople ! sublime, superb  
Constantinople, glory to creation and man !  
I had never dreamed of such beauty !

EDMONDO DE AMICIS.



# CONSTANTINOPLE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

THE history of no city exceeds that of Constantinople in dramatic interest, and no other can boast of so commanding a position, or one so well suited to the splendid capital of a proud and powerful empire.

As Byzantium, — its name through more than nine centuries, — it was one of the most remote Greek colonies, surrounded by a barbarous country, and but narrowly separated from a sea dangerous to mariners, and fatal to those who fell into the hands of the inhabitants of its coasts, — a sea which was both a dread and a temptation to Greek and Roman seamen. When Greek colonists first established themselves on the borders of the Propontis, — now Marmora, — this dreaded sea was called the “Axine,” or “Inhospitable;” and its associations with the perilous voyage of the Argonautic fleet, with Jason, Medea, and the Golden Fleece, inspired a terror of it which yielded but slowly before the experiences of those who ventured upon its waters and returned in safety. But at length it so far vindicated itself as to be rechristened; and the “Euxine,” or “Hospitable,” lost its deadly terrors, while retaining enough of its peculiar characteristics to justify the words of Lord Byron, so frequently recalled

by those who experience the discomforts of its chopping currents.<sup>1</sup>

Then, as now, the waters of this sea flowed rapidly through the narrow Bosphorus, and rushing on through the Sea of Marmora, the Dardanelles, and the Ægean Sea, were mingled with those of the greater Mediterranean. The steep and wooded banks of the Bosphorus, from the Cyanean rocks which guarded the entrance to the Euxine, even to the port of Byzantium itself, were studded with temples and altars, where prayers and sacrifices were offered to the gods, in the hope of securing their protection from the dangers of these untoward waters.

Along the sixteen winding miles of these lonely straits, tradition has located the scenes once haunted by the mythical beings who can no longer be discerned, and the present castles of Europe and Asia stand upon the foundations of the temples of Serapis and Jupiter Urius, at the narrowest part of the channel, where Darius connected the continents by a bridge of boats, about 500 B. C.

The wonderful beauty of the site of Byzantium was fully equalled, perhaps even surpassed, by its political and commercial advantages. Easily defended on its land borders, its position on the sea afforded the assurance of vast wealth and prosperity. The duties levied on corn ships brought a large revenue to the Byzantines, and the fisheries were a prolific source of wealth; for the fish, which, coming from the Euxine, filled the waters of the Bosphorus, inclined to the European shore, and furnished a living to a multitude of fishermen, as well as food to rich and poor alike.

The splendid harbour, almost tideless, and so deep that merchandise could be landed without small boats, was called the Golden Horn, at a very early date. Gibbon

<sup>1</sup> "There's not a sea the passenger e'er pukes in  
Turns up more dangerous breakers than the Euxine."



says that the largest vessels may rest their prows against the houses while their sterns are floating in the water. The word "golden" was scarcely adequate to indicate the endless tide of riches which, flowing from the distant countries of the world, were gathered in the capacious Byzantine port, the peculiar position of which afforded security to enormous merchant fleets.

About one hundred and twenty miles to the southwest, the Hellespont, or Straits of the Dardanelles, separated the Sea of Marmora from the *Ægean*, and formed the southern gate to Byzantium, as the Bosphorus made the northern. By means of enormous chains, these avenues were easily closed to enemies or opened to friends; and so advantageous was the position of this capital, that when both these gates were shut, every necessity and many luxuries were produced within the enclosure, in a supply so generous as to satisfy its vast population. The neighbouring country, which still, even under the taxes and oppression of the present rule, is rich in the plentiful harvests of its vineyards and gardens, afforded in the ancient days many table luxuries, and even wines so exquisite as to be world-famous, — wines of which Ulysses spoke with rapture.

In short, Byzantium, on her seven hills, overlooking the coasts of Europe and Asia, with a temperate climate, a productive soil, and vast commercial resources, was a city to be envied and coveted by all the rulers of the earth.

Little is known of its earliest history, but in the fifth century B. C. it was a powerful city, to which many neighbouring peoples were subject. Continued peace and prosperity, however, were not to be enjoyed in those days of endless warfare; and Byzantium was, during the succeeding centuries, the scene of sieges, conflagrations, and all the horrors of a barbarous age. Persians, Macedo-

nians, Athenians, Thracians, Gauls, and Romans contended for its possession; and even when no pronounced war was in progress, this capital suffered severely from the depredations of the surrounding barbarians. Its crops were stolen on the eve of the harvest, and all possible injuries and insults to its people and their rulers were perpetrated again and again.

Byzantium was necessarily more or less involved in the great Roman wars which preceded the Christian era; and in 148 B. C. she became an ally of Rome, as a confederate state, retaining its liberty. The history of Rome, and especially some speeches of its greatest generals and orators, prove that Byzantium was faithful to this alliance, and under these conditions enjoyed great prosperity.

At this time it was especially rich in works of art, and in spite of the sieges and attacks it had sustained, had shown a marvellous power of recuperation, and had succeeded in religiously guarding its statues and other artistic treasures from injury. It was attractive to all travellers, and retained the characteristics of a Greek city, affording great advantages to the student of archæology, while its luxurious life was fascinating to the mere pleasure-seeker.

In 70 A. D. Byzantium was a Roman province; but this change had made no essential difference in its condition, and little is known of it until more than a century later, when Septimius Severus was contending with Pescennius Niger for his position as Roman emperor in the East. Byzantium declared herself in favor of the Syrian general, and doubtless had the ambition to become the capital of a vast Eastern Empire. Its fortifications were famous throughout the world. All the scientific means of defence then known were at its command. Its engines were said to be sufficient to lift ships from the water; and its soldiers may well have been inspired with

undoubting courage by the presence of their engineer, Priscus, who proved himself so great a master of his profession as to command the respect of Severus, into whose service he later entered.

Great as was the reliance to be placed on their splendid fortifications and engineering skill, the Byzantines had a second invaluable support in their numerous vessels, manned by skilful, brave, and loyal seamen.

Their large ships, with dangerous beaks, were greatly dreaded by the navies of other countries, especially when in their own waters, where their pilots knew every advantage that could be taken, and where the narrow straits, through which an enemy must pass, were easily guarded against fleets that would be difficult to overcome when in more open seas. They also had divers so skilful that they even attached ropes to the Roman vessels under water, and hauled them into the Byzantine harbor as prizes of war.

The siege was sustained three years, which proves that however pleasure-loving the Byzantines were in times of peace, their courage and loyalty were marvellous when their city was in danger. Their vessels were repaired with timbers from their houses, and the women gave their hair to be worked into ropes. Stones wrenched from splendid edifices, and statues of bronze, were hurled from the walls on the heads of the besiegers. So great were the stores within the capital at the beginning of the siege that no need of food was felt for a long time; but when it came, there were no possible means of relief. Severus had conquered the neighbouring tribes, and could easily feed his troops. If he could overcome the Byzantines on the sea, their city would be his, and without it he could not establish his power in the East.

At length, after enduring the sufferings of famine to such an extent that the weaker became food for the strong,

a company of Byzantines took advantage of a frightful storm to take to their vessels, hoping, in the terrible condition of the sea, to be able to pass the Roman galleys. But they miscalculated their chances, and in the overcrowded condition of their boats were at an immense disadvantage. The Romans attacked them furiously, and instead of fighting a fair battle, they simply pushed the Byzantines into the sea to drown. Many of the horrors of this engagement were witnessed from the walls of the city. The people beheld the corpses of their friends and neighbours floating back to their home; and the failure of this bold attempt to escape from the famine within, and the enemy without their walls, proved to the survivors that the time for surrender had come.

Severus proved a cruel conqueror, and permitted the common people alone to live. The soldiers and the higher classes were put to death. The wealth of Byzantium was confiscated; the city and the territory it controlled were given to the city of Perinthus. In the destruction of the walls, the Romans displayed a foolish love of revenge and great lack of wisdom; for not only was this the severest trial to the Byzantines, but it permitted the Asiatic barbarians to rush in and plunder, where the magnificent fortifications had before rendered their attacks fruitless.

The struggles of Byzantium during a long period after this conquest by Severus, A. D. 196, are too involved for description here. They make a harrowing story of the alternate successes and cruelties of the Romans and barbarians. Although the walls were rebuilt, there were times when the Byzantines trembled lest they should become the slaves of the Goths, and they willingly aided the Emperor Claudius II. in his great battle at Naissus, A. D. 269. Not until A. D. 324, when Constantine, the sole ruler of the Roman Empire, besieged the city, was

there a strong and enduring government at Byzantium. It was then made the capital of the civilized world, and the chief seat of the Christian religion, which was henceforth to be the cult of the multitudes subject to Rome. The name of the capital was changed to Constantinople; and the portion of its history which belongs to that of the Christian world now began.



## CHAPTER II.

### CONSTANTINOPLE AND CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

324-337.

NO city of the world is entered by so ideal a portal as that through which one reaches Constantinople from the Mediterranean. Traversing the Ægean Sea, and passing through the Hellespont into the Sea of Marmora, this glorious capital at length is seen rising from the waters, — an entrancing vision, with its rich colouring, its seven hills crowned with glistening minarets and domes, its cypresses, firs, and pines, uniting with its shattered walls and buttresses to present a panorama which is unequalled in beauty and interest.

Constantinople sits "at the meeting of two seas and two continents, like a diamond between sapphires and emeralds."<sup>1</sup> From its heights one looks upon the storied shores that almost meet at its feet, and wonders that the air is not filled with the ghosts of heroes who here achieved the fame of which poets in all time delight to sing.

Coming hither, we have passed the plains of Troy, and sailed above the watery grave of that fair Theban maid whose enduring memorial is in the name these straits still bear; and Abydos recalls that other youth, struggling

"on Helle's wave  
When Love, who sent, forgot to save  
The young, the beautiful, the brave."

<sup>1</sup> Von Hammer.



The Mysian Olympus, "parliamental seat of heavenly powers," still towers aloft, wearing its veil of clouds as if in mourning for the millions that have died within its sight; while the numberless exquisite islands scattered over these historic seas are all associated with the classic past, and so recall its history, its legends, and its poetry that for the time we quite forget that we are at the end of the nineteenth century, and almost look for the fleet of the Argonauts to sail along beside us.

Gray walls, in triple ranks, come into view. Among their stones are there not relics of the walls of Constantine and Theodosius? Their towers and battlements are draped with vines and overgrown by friendly shrubs, which partly hide the ghastly rents made by enemies and widened by Time, and their luxurious growth contributes the single element of life and beauty in this scene of desolation.

Approaching the Castle of the Seven Towers, we have Stamboul on our left; the city of Constantine, stretching four miles along the Sea of Marmora, and rising to the crest of its lofty hills on the west, where hundreds of minarets, domes, and towers vie with each other in lifting themselves to the blue heavens above. It is our first sight of a part of that whole which, by common consent, is granted to be the most beautiful spot in the world, — a sight which makes an epoch in one's existence, and affords a standard for natural beauty that must ever remain unchanged.

The eye follows the line of quaint old structures close to the sea until, rounding Seraglio Point, the entrance to the Bosphorus spreads out before us, and the Golden Horn discloses a surprising vista. It is full of life. Hundreds of caiques flit like insects here and there, — out and in among the huge war-ships which carry the red flag with the crescent; darting swiftly between the freight and

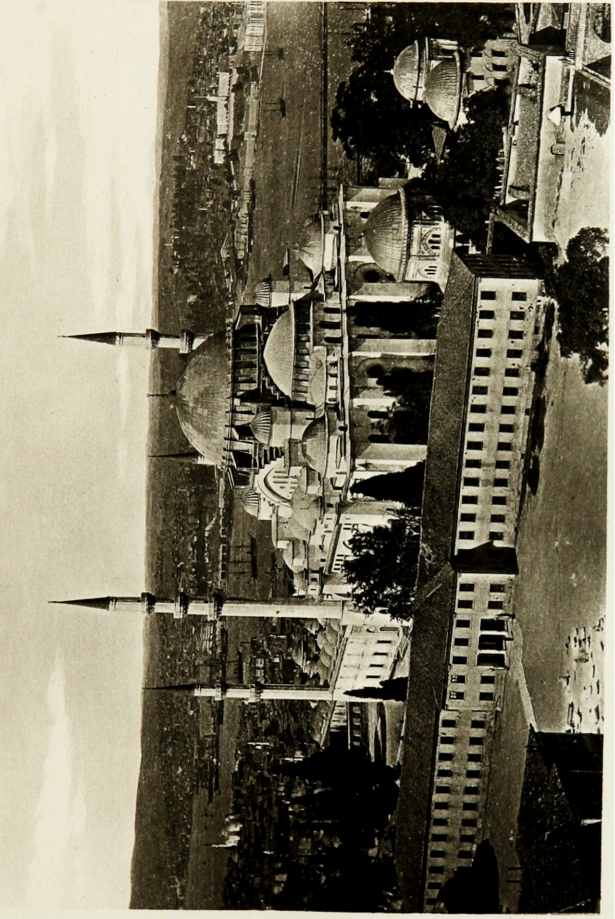
passenger steamers of all nations, the corn ships of Russia, the picturesque feluccas of the Greek, and scores of curiously rigged boats, for which I know no names.

On each side rises a city,—Stamboul to the south, Galata to the north, with Pera still higher as its background. On the one hand, above the forest of masts, sails, and flags, rise mosques and towers, pinnacles and minarets, with plume-like trees and shrubs thrusting themselves out in every possible space; while on the other, Galata and Tophane extend along the shore, with the bustle of commerce and trade pervading the very air; above these is Pera, with its mansions, gardens, cemeteries, and cypress groves; and still beyond are the suburban villas and gardens which overlook the Bosphorus.

Upon the heights of Stamboul stand gigantic mosques, with their ivory-like minarets, which catch the colours from the setting sun, and glow with gold and scarlet, in vivid contrast to the groves of cypress-trees which are frequently in long processional lines from the summits to the feet of these broad hills. Saint Sophia, with four white minarets, and her famous dome above her white and rose-coloured walls; Sultan Ahmed, from which rise six lance-like towers; the ten-domed Soliman the Great; Mohammed II., built above the ruins of the church of the Holy Apostles, the burial-place of the Christian Emperors; the mosque of Selim; the Seraglio of Tekyr, and above all, the Tower of the Seraskiarate, — are the more prominent features of Stamboul. Surrounding these is a multitude of smaller mosques, tombs, seraglios, kiosks, and edifices of many kinds, in a variety of colours; and everywhere, from the heights to the sea, where a space exists, some growing vine or shrub or tree pushes itself out, and by its beauty and vigorous growth conceals the glaring defects which would otherwise mar this fascinating panorama.



*Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent.*







On the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, Scutari and Kadi-Kioi are seen, with their thousands of gayly tinted houses amidst the most verdant gardens; and these are overtopped by scores of mosques of dazzling whiteness, while the cypress groves of the extensive Turkish and British cemeteries afford a rich contrast to the white barracks, the gay villages, and the domes and minarets which climb the mountain at the back, and are doubled in the blue waters of the straits.

The Bosphorus winds northward to the Black Sea between rows of palaces, cafés, gardens, and villages. Nature has here showered her beauties in a profusion that cannot be surpassed. The exquisitely softened azure sky is reflected in the clearest and bluest of seas. The beautiful contour of the shores; the grace with which the Golden Horn curves into the Sweet Waters; the broad sweep of the Bosphorus; the Sea of Marmora, with the bold, rocky islands on its bosom; the gently receding heights beyond Scutari; and the grand Olympus, which at times reveals its blushing snows beneath the rising sun, — unite to make a picture unrivalled in its loveliness.

Each time that I have visited these scenes, the Bosphorus has cast a spell on me. Its varying aspects beneath the brilliancy of a sunny morning, or the softer illumination of a moonlit night, impart to it a beauty and witchery that cannot be described. Its keynote is curiously sad, with a sadness that is a pleasure, — a strange, weird sensation, of which one does not seek to know the cause, lest understanding it should do its matter-of-fact work and dispel the charm. In it are mingled, together with other emotions, an unalloyed delight in the exquisite scene, and a keen regret that the heroism, romance, and poetry that have existed here are now found but in the printed page; a blending of sorrow and disgust at the present degradation and decay, with the hope that these must

pass away, and civilization and art resume their sway in this

“land of the cedar and vine  
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine ;  
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume,  
Wax faint in the gardens of Gul in her bloom ;  
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,  
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute ;  
Where the tints of the earth and the hues of the sky,  
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,  
And the purple of ocean is deepest in dye ;  
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,  
And all save the spirit of man is divine.”<sup>1</sup>

Two characteristics of Constantinople are most impressive to the stranger, and doubtless have an unconscious effect, even when no longer novel. The first is the feeling that the sea is everywhere. It borders Stamboul on two sides, and separates it from Galata and Pera, which it again parts from Scutari; and yet these three essentially make one city, — Constantinople.

The second is the shrill call to prayer by the muezzin, which peals out five times each day from the galleries of the minarets, piercing the busy hum of the crowd below, and making itself heard above all else. It is a most impressive thought that from every Mohammedan minaret in Asia, Africa, and Europe, at these stated hours, this cry goes forth. The muezzin steps out upon the terrace, and after a moment of silence covers his ears with his hands, raises his eyes to the sky above him, and slowly chants his call, which may be thus translated: “God is great! There is but one God! Mahomet is the prophet of God! Come to prayer! Come and be saved! God is great! God is one alone! Come to prayer!” This is repeated to each point of the compass; and as the voice dies away from one minaret, others are heard, who have

<sup>1</sup> Lord Byron.

not yet completed the call, and one by one, gradually, these voices of the air are stilled. Thus the name of "Allah" rings ever in one's ears, and the Mohammedan god cannot be forgotten, as the Christian Deity too often is.

It is a matter for congratulation to Europeans that their quarter is in Pera, with its commonplace aspect, since here they have the exquisite view of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus, the bridge, the Tower of Galata, and the heights of Stamboul ever spread out before them. But when the remembrance of the great events that have here had place rushes over one, he longs to get away from this uninspiring Pera, and from the hum and stir of that busiest of marts, Stamboul, into some stilly spot where the atmosphere of Byzantium faintly lingers, and the present poison in the air has not utterly dispelled the spirit of the old, old days, — a spot to which the ghosts of those who here lived from the fourth to the fifteenth century might willingly come to recall the scenes in which as men they acted their parts.

Perhaps no more difficult task could be presented to the imagination than that of reconstructing Byzantium as it existed at the height of its glory, before the Latin conquest. For while we have a vast store of material with which to build our imaginary city, and voluminous word pictures of its appearance and its life, they present a world so different from any that we know, and above all, so unlike the Istamboul of the Turk, that the attempt is most unpromising.

No single spot in this great city is so associated with its entire history as is Seraglio Point. Here for centuries has been a palace, the home of its rulers, beside the Temple of the Divine Wisdom, Saint Sophia, in which so many of the wonderful pageants, tragedies, and comedies (!) of Constantinople have had place. This promontory is not surpassed in beauty by any spot on the entire coast

of Europe. It was the Acropolis of Byzantium, and the centre of the commerce of its time; while from it the great highways of Eastern Europe took their course, distributing the treasures of all lands, brought hither on the seas which mingle their waters at its feet.

We shall not here recount its earliest history, and the events with which the names of Pausanias, Cimon, Alcibiades, Lysander, Thrasybulus, Epaminondas, Philip, and many others are associated. We will but note that while the latter general was besieging Byzantium, and on a murky night was about to seize the town, a dazzling light, appearing in the heavens, revealed their danger to its inhabitants. The miracle was doubly commemorated, — by a statue to torch-bearing Hecate, and by the crescent found on ancient Byzantine coins, which is to this day the device of Constantinople, and of its Mohammedan conquerors, wherever their symbol is seen.

As we have said, the story of Byzantium is one of constant warfare; and yet, so prosperous were its people that in its rare seasons of peace the life of its higher classes was most luxurious. Its baths and other public buildings were magnificent, and its Hippodrome was surrounded by beautiful porticoes and various edifices, in which the people passed their days, eating and drinking, and fitting themselves to become the prey of a vigorous and ambitious soldier, like Constantine the Great.

Remembering the great strategic and commercial advantages of this site, we at once perceive the reasons that led Constantine to found his Eastern seat of empire here; for before his time the riches of North and South — the timber and grains from the Euxine, the gems of Ceylon, the treasures of India, and the maize of Egypt — all met in the capacious port of Byzantium by a system of commercial circulation, as naturally as the blood of the human system passes through the heart.



Constantine desired to be regarded as the founder rather than the conqueror of the city, and, following the example of other founders, he declared himself directed by a heavenly vision which revealed to him the will of God, which he promptly and gladly fulfilled.

Although some customary Pagan rites were omitted, the emperor made the ceremony of the founding of the city sufficiently impressive. He is said to have borne a golden image of the goddess of Fortune in his hand, when, with uplifted lance, and followed by a solemn procession, he walked over the boundaries of his New Rome. When the astonishing circumference which he thus indicated was remarked, he replied, "I shall still advance until He, the invisible guide who marches before me, thinks it proper to stop."

Thus the new city was much larger than the old, and included five of the Seven Hills, which seem a part of an harmonious whole, and were all taken into the limits of the capital a little more than a century after the death of Constantine; and in the time of Justinian, at the end of the seventh century, the circumference of the city was about fourteen Roman miles.

The vast numbers of men employed to carry out the designs of the emperor, and the marvellous sums expended on his projects, are almost beyond comprehension. That his work was well done may be seen by the existing remnants of his walls between the Seven Towers and the Golden Horn. Near at hand were the splendid forests of the Euxine and the rich quarries of Proconnesus. The famous cities of Greece and Asia were robbed of their treasures to satisfy the greed of Constantine. The works of the immortal Greeks, of Phidias and Lysippus, were torn from the places for which they were designed; and neither the national pride of the Greeks in the trophies of their victories, nor their profound veneration for the

statues of their deities, sages, and heroes, deterred the proud Roman from adding them to the splendours of the city which he had called by his own name. The historian Cedrenus called attention to the fact that the souls (spirit) of the men whose statues were thus transplanted were utterly wanting in their new surroundings.

On the second hill, where during the siege the tent of Constantine had been placed, the chief Forum was constructed, in the form of an enormous ellipse, which may still be traced. On opposite sides were entrances beneath triumphal arches, and it was enclosed by porticoes, filled with statues of gods and heroes, carved in marbles and moulded in brass. The number of these statues was constantly increased until, in the twelfth century, Nicetas assures us that they were more numerous than the inhabitants of the modern city.

In the centre stood a magnificent column, the remnant of which is now known as the "burnt pillar." It was originally composed of ten pieces of porphyry, bound together by bands of copper. Each block of porphyry was ten feet high and eleven feet in diameter, and the column thus composed was mounted on a pedestal of white marble, twenty feet high, beneath which it was said that the Palladium was buried. On the top of this column was a colossal bronze statue of Apollo, believed to have been the work of Phidias. The god, crowned with glittering rays, held a globe in one hand and a sceptre in the other. This statue was called by the name of the emperor; but Von Hammer speaks of the shamelessness of Constantine, and says that he placed his own statue on the column, with the symbols of both Apollo and Christ, substituting the nails of the cross for the rays of the sun. Julian and Theodosius, following the example of Constantine, each placed his statue on this famous column. In 1012 the statue was injured by an earthquake, and fell in the



*Burnt Column of Constantine.*







reign of Alexius Comnenus, when it was replaced by the cross.

The Hippodrome, or Circus, of this Forum was richly ornamented with statues and obelisks. A curious fragment still remains. It is a pillar of brass formed of the twisted bodies of three serpents, with the tails downwards. The heads originally upheld the golden tripod which the victorious Greeks had consecrated in the Temple of Delphi, after the defeat of Xerxes. A picture made in 1675 shows the three heads, which are now gone. One of them was struck off with the iron mace or battle-axe of Mohammed the Conqueror, in order to display his unusual strength. Few antiquities can be so clearly identified as is this column of the serpents, now more than fourteen centuries old.

From the throne of the Hippodrome the emperor descended a winding staircase to his palace, situated on the Propontis between the Hippodrome and the church of S. Sophia. The palace was surrounded by gardens, porticoes, and courts, one of which, the Augusteum, was between the principal front of the palace and the church of the Divine Wisdom.

A great variety of edifices, such as would add to the splendour of the new capital, were rapidly constructed, and the magnificence of its baths, with their marbles, statues, and columns was unequalled; while theatres, palaces, porticoes, aqueducts, fountains, senate halls, churches, and splendid private houses, as well as the homes of the poorer people, arose as if by magic.

In order to populate his New Rome, the emperor invited hither the prominent men of the older capital and of the Eastern provinces of the empire. Those who deserted Rome for the new capital were not men of the best fibre; and Constantine paid a premium on their coming by conferring country estates on them, with the condition that

they should also maintain city houses. The lower classes were fed by the emperor's bounty, according to tradition; and the whole tendency of life under the new order of things was to produce a population of idle pleasure-seekers, void of patriotism or any noble sentiment; and soon it was not unusual for men to maim themselves rather than fight the battles of their country, which office was left to hired Goths and Germans. The indolent and luxurious life of Constantinople proved most attractive; and in less than a century its riches, splendour, and population rivalled those of Rome itself, and although the Western capital was nominally supreme, the new city was independent of all dictation or restraint.

The absolute date of the dedication of Constantinople is a matter of doubt, as the best authorities disagree; but all represent the occasion as of great interest and splendour, and one of its ceremonies was annually repeated on the birthday of the city. The gilded statue of Constantine, bearing in its right hand an image of the genius of the capital, was mounted on a triumphal car, and drawn around the Hippodrome in the midst of a procession of richly dressed guards, carrying white tapers in their hands. When opposite the throne, the reigning monarch arose, and reverently adored this representation of the founder of the city.

Although this ceremony was long since abandoned, the fame of Constantine the Great survives in the name of his city; for though its conquerors call it Istamboul, the European peoples, the Greeks of to-day, the Arabic writings, and indeed many scholarly Turks, perpetuate the memory of its founder in the use of the name Constantinople.

Although an edict published at the dedication of the city called it the Second or New Rome, the spirit of the government, and the methods by which it was conducted,

differed essentially from those of the Eternal City. No Roman simplicity obtained in the city on the Bosphorus. On the contrary, no circumstance was too insignificant to be made a matter of official importance, any neglect of which was seriously reprimanded or punished. In fact, the life of the court and the officers of the empire resembled a theatrical spectacle, magnificently mounted and brought out with the most careful attention to the minutest details.

The impressive New Year ceremony of the old capital was imitated in the new. The consuls, in the splendour of purple, gold, and gems, moved in procession to a public square, and, seated in their chairs of office, freed a slave, as the elder Brutus had done. The festival thus inaugurated continued some days. The games that were celebrated, the circus, theatre, and amphitheatre, were conducted at an expense and on a scale of magnificence that surpassed the marvellous splendours of "The Thousand and one Nights."

These ceremonials indicate a mingling of Paganism and Christianity in the mind of Constantine; and though he built churches and called his capital a Christian city, we cannot overlook what S. Jerome pointed out, — that the decoration of Constantinople involved the spoliation of nearly all other cities of the world, and these Pagan trophies failed to impart to it an aspect which accorded with the teaching or spirit of the founder of Christianity.

While the emperor conferred honours and wealth upon the clergy, he kept so strict a watch over their acts as made him essentially the head of the Church, as of the State, and in virtue of his authority he summoned the first general council at Nice, A. D. 325. But the Christianity of Constantine was of a half-hearted and feebly comprehended sort, that could never equal in power the



Christianity of the West, where its force was spent in the propagation of progress and virtue rather than in such discussions of dogmas and metaphysics as prevailed in the Eastern Church.

The hope of making the New Rome the centre of government for the world depended upon the establishment of a sincere concord between the people and their rulers; upon the welding together of provinces that were totally different in their characteristics, and separated by great distances, over which there were no organized and safe methods of communication; but as we study its history, we find that the people had no sense of their responsibility.

Constantine, who had been a great disciplinarian of armies, now became a legislator, and justice was more systematically administered than heretofore. Slavery was greatly restricted, and Christians could not be the bondsmen of Jews and Pagans. Parents could no longer sell their children, and were aided to support them by the government. Cruel punishments, especially that of crucifixion, were abolished, and in a variety of minor ways the safety and happiness of the people were increased.

As opposed to these benevolent measures, was the heavy taxation which was necessitated by the vast undertakings of the government and the magnificence of the court. The burden was especially heavy on the cultivators of the soil, who were reduced to the condition of serfs, since they could not become soldiers, but must continue to follow the occupation of their fathers. They were disarmed to prevent rebellions, and the class which had made the backbone of the Roman army had no part in political or military affairs, while their lives were far more comfortable than under the former system. The profession of arms thus became almost a matter of inheritance, and

the masses were entirely out of touch with the ruling classes. Under these conditions patriotism and political virtue were unknown to the majority of the subjects of the Emperor Constantine. But however faulty his policy now appears, this ruler inaugurated an order of things which had a great influence on the world for centuries; perhaps we may say that some of its results still survive.

The character of Constantine has been pictured from the extremes of praise and censure, but the truth presents an unusual blending of virtues and vices. Handsome, majestic, and graceful in person, he preserved these natural gifts to his latest years, by a life of temperance and chastity. His mind was vigorous and alert; and the disadvantages of a meagre education did not prevent him from appreciating the value of learning, art, and science, all of which he munificently encouraged. His industry and patience were phenomenal, and commanded the admiration of those who disapproved his measures. His ambition was boundless. He loved glory, and was of the most intrepid spirit, by aid of which he inspired his soldiers with confidence in himself and courage to execute his plans, which were those of a consummate general, as has been acknowledged by his severest critics. Gibbon ascribes his successes to his abilities rather than to his fortune. His courtesy of manner attracted all who approached him; and though his sincerity in friendship has been denied, he proved himself, in some instances, a devoted and faithful adherent to those whom he loved.

In contrast to these virtues stand the rapaciousness and prodigality of his later life. The vast sums which he spent were partly lavished on unworthy favourites, who were also permitted such practices as gradually undermined the administration, and lessened the esteem of his people for their emperor.

“The dress and manners which, towards the decline of life, he chose to affect, served only to degrade him in the eyes of mankind. The Asiatic pomp which had been adopted by the pride of Diocletian, assumed an air of softness and effeminacy in the person of Constantine. He is represented with false hair of various colours, laboriously arranged by the skilful artists of the times ; a diadem of a new and more expensive fashion ; a profusion of gems and pearls, of collars and bracelets ; and a variegated flowing robe of silk, most curiously embroidered with flowers of gold. In such apparel, scarcely to be excused by the youth and folly of Elagabalus, we are at a loss to discover the wisdom of an aged monarch and the simplicity of a Roman veteran. A mind thus relaxed by prosperity and indulgence was incapable of rising to that magnanimity which disdains suspicion and dares to forgive. The deaths of Maximian and Licinius may perhaps be justified by the maxims of policy as they are taught in the school of tyrants ; but an impartial narrative of the executions, or rather murders, which sullied the declining age of Constantine, will suggest to our most candid thoughts the idea of a prince who could sacrifice, without reluctance, the laws of justice and the feelings of nature to the dictates either of his passions or of his interest.”<sup>1</sup>

Quite in accord with this picture of the later years of the emperor is the fact that while he beautified the Baths of Zeuxippus, and lavished such riches on them that they were soon famous as the most splendid and luxurious in the world, and while all kinds of edifices for convenience and amusement were erected with surprising celerity, few churches were provided for the worship of his subjects. He deprived the Pagan temples of their revenues, and permitted some of them to remain undisturbed, while he converted others to the uses of the Christians. The Temple of Peace made a part of the church of S. Sophia, and the church of the Twelve Apostles was fin-

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.



ished but a few days before the death of Constantine, in 337. This church was the burial-place of the Christian emperors; its site is now occupied by the Mosque of Mohammed II.

Here the bodies of the early rulers of the empire were enshrined in sarcophagi of porphyry and a variety of rich and beautiful marbles. But these tombs of the imperial dead were not secure from spoliation, and the deed was not left to be done by the Turk. The Latins, in 1204, shamelessly rifled the church of the Twelve Apostles, stole its treasures, and scattered the bones of the emperors to destruction, with blaspheming and mockery; and it is not to be regretted that the scene of such Christian desecration is covered by a temple in which thousands of men have humbly prayed to their God, according to the teaching of his Prophet.

## CHAPTER III.

VALENS, THEODOSIUS THE GREAT, ARCADIUS, AND  
THEODOSIUS II.

364-527.

THE three sons of Constantine proved singularly unworthy of the empire which he divided between them; and the same is also true of their successors, Julian and Jovian. The most important result of the quarter of a century which succeeded the death of the emperor was the loss of five provinces east of the Tigris, and the city of Nisibis, with fortifications which had been an important bulwark of the Roman strength in the East.

Valens succeeded to the throne of Constantinople in 364; and early in his reign the Huns began their ravages in Europe, and even the much dreaded Goths were driven before them to the banks of the Danube. These last had become a half civilized and Christianized people; and when they begged to be permitted to settle in Thrace as Roman subjects, their prayer was granted on the conditions that they should surrender their arms and allow their children to be dispersed in the Asiatic provinces, as pledges of their good conduct. Fear of the Huns drove the Goths to consent to these extreme demands; but later they succeeded in bribing the imperial ministers to permit them to retain their weapons, and the plains of Bulgaria were soon occupied by a wealthy, powerful, and dangerous multitude.

For a time all went well; but when the Romans demanded exorbitant prices of the Goths for the necessities

of life, the latter rebelled, put the Roman legions to flight, ravaged the fruitful regions north of Constantinople, and massed two hundred thousand warriors under the walls of Adrianople.

Valens, who was at Antioch, rapidly brought his legions to the defence of his capital, and called on his nephew Gratian, who ruled at Rome, to aid him. But so impatient was Valens, and so desirous of defeating the Goths by his prowess alone, that he did not await assistance, but attacked his enemy under great disadvantages. He suffered a terrible defeat, and lost his life; two thirds of his soldiers perished, and the Goths were masters of the territory south of the Danube. Happily the strongholds of Adrianople and Constantinople were able to repulse the attacks of these semi-barbarians, who were swept off in great numbers by the missiles hurled from the fortified walls; and the survivors were dispersed throughout the wilds of Thrace.

Valens was succeeded by Theodosius, who was called from the cultivation of his farm in Spain to the throne of Constantinople. Gibbon says: "The whole period of the history of the world will not perhaps afford a similar example of an elevation at the same time so pure and so honorable." Theodosius was thirty-two years old when he became emperor, and was as handsome and commanding in person as he was superior in character. His reign is notable for the settlement of the Goths within his empire and the overthrow of Paganism.

Although he had been reared a soldier, Theodosius preferred negotiations before wars; and by his skilful treatment of the Goths, within four years these formidable enemies were peacefully settled in Roumelia and other provinces, and were no longer the avowed enemies of the Romans.

Theodosius was a Christian of a very pronounced type,

and made it one of his first and most important cares to establish orthodoxy, and exterminate the Arianism which prevailed at Constantinople. He was not baptized, however, until after he came to the throne, and was the first emperor who received that sacrament in the full faith of the Trinity.

In 381 Theodosius called a general council of the Church at Constantinople, in order to establish the faith as declared in the Nicene creed. This council ended in a scandalous turbulence; but as it had confirmed the emperor's views of the Catholic faith in the most positive manner, he proceeded to enforce its decisions. The most rigorous punishments were decreed for all heretics, which were not often executed; for though Theodosius was mercilessly cruel at times, he by no means embraced all his opportunities for persecutions. His whole heart, however, was fixed on the extinction of Paganism in his empire; and this he accomplished as far as its outward manifestations were concerned, even if he could not root it from the hearts of men.

Theodosius committed one crime which stands out in lurid colours, even from his blood-stained age. His general, Botheric, and several other officers, were brutally murdered by the people of Thessalonica, where Theodosius had himself spent much time. The news of these murders, and of many indecent circumstances attending them, was carried to the emperor at Milan. His fiery temper was fully aroused, and in spite of the counsels of the bishops, he despatched messengers with orders for a cowardly and terrible vengeance to be taken, not only on those who had murdered his officers, but on all the city and the strangers within its gates. After his commands had been given, he endeavoured to prevent their execution; but it was too late. The people of Thessalonica were invited, in the name of the emperor, to witness the games in the circus, and there

they were butchered by thousands. The carnage lasted three hours. The victims were of all ages and both sexes, and their numbers are estimated from seven to fifteen thousand, by good authorities.

When Ambrose, the great Archbishop of Milan, learned of this massacre, he at first avoided the emperor; but believing that silence before such a crime would be a sin for one in his office, he both publicly and privately admonished Theodosius, declaring that no secret contrition or penance could atone for such sin as he had committed. At the porch of the church the archbishop denied the emperor admission to the house of God.

The remnant of the emperor's life could not suffice for any proper penance, and at length he was permitted to appear in the midst of the cathedral, with no insignia of his rank, and with all possible humility, and there confess his crime and implore pardon. Eight months after this dramatic act the suppliant was permitted to receive the sacrament, and it is believed that the edict which fixed a period of thirty days between the sentence for a crime and its execution resulted from the over-haste of Theodosius in taking his revenge.

On the death of Gratian, who had ruled the Western Empire, Theodosius became the Emperor of the World, as the Eastern and Western Roman empires were then called. Valentinian, the brother and heir of Gratian, was a mere child, and his mother, Justina, fled with him and her daughter Galla, to ask the protection of Theodosius. This was readily granted, and with the greatest good-will, as the emperor fell madly in love with the beautiful young princess, and married her. For the love of Galla, Theodosius fought the battles of Valentinian, and seated him on his throne; but he was soon after murdered, and one Eugenius reigned in his place,



until he was in turn overthrown by Theodosius, who again governed "the World."

He did not long enjoy this distinction, however, as he lived but four months after his great victories.

"Notwithstanding the recent animosities of a civil war, his death was universally lamented. The barbarians whom he had vanquished, and the churchmen by whom he had been subdued, celebrated with loud and sincere applause the qualities of the deceased which appeared the most valuable in their eyes."<sup>1</sup>

The author just quoted says that with Theodosius "the genius of Rome expired." At least, it did not survive in his sons, Arcadius and Honorius, on whom he had conferred the title of Augusti. To the eldest, Arcadius, the throne of Constantinople was assigned, while the child Honorius, but eleven years old, was sent to be the Emperor of the West, under the guardianship of the great soldier Stilicho.

From this time the history of Constantinople is essentially divorced from that of Rome. Indeed, the two empires soon lost all sympathy with each other. The Western people looked with scorn upon the Eastern capital, and prided themselves upon their inheritance of the "Old Rome;" while the more civilized and luxurious inhabitants of the city of Constantine despised the rude and uncultured Romans. This separation occurred just when harmony between these powers would have been of great value in repelling the barbarians; but the two Romes soon became as essentially antagonistic as they could have been had they been bound by no ties of blood, and had not claimed to be the exponents and supporters of Christianity.

Constantinople was now in a position to be made the great power of the world, and to be firmly established in

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

that position. Her splendid fortifications had defied the great Alaric. She had abundant supplies of gold in Thrace and Pontus, and the largest commerce in the world, while her provinces were populous and rich.

Had Arcadius equalled his father, he could have attained to one glory after another, and reached the loftiest pinnacle of power and fame. But although he was called Cæsar and Augustus, he was as contemptible in character and acquirements as in personal appearance, and was easily ruled by the eunuchs and women who flattered his vanity and ministered to his vicious inclinations. His minister, Eutropius, incited him to great cruelties; and so infamous did this favourite eunuch become, that a powerful Gothic enemy declined to negotiate with Arcadius unless Eutropius were first delivered into his hands. The empress Eudoxia easily persuaded Arcadius to profit by the sacrifice of his favourite; and after four years of almost imperial power, he was exiled, then recalled, and finally executed.

The luxury and splendour of the court of Arcadius can scarcely be exaggerated. It was equalled only by its corruption and the depravity of its life. The emperor's throne was of massive gold, as well as his chariot, which was decked with jewels of great size, curtained with a rich purple stuff, carpeted with snowy white, and drawn by mules of the same spotless colour. The silken robes of the emperor were embroidered with golden dragons, and everything that could be invented to add to his luxury and splendour was put under tribute to this contemptible and almost deformed ruler.

This magnificence in Constantinople is all the more striking by its contrast to the condition of other countries at this period. Alaric was plundering the chief cities of Greece, and inflicting on that country the ruin from which it never recovered. Its great public works, aqueducts and

roads, as well as its splendid edifices and numberless works of art, were ruthlessly destroyed ; and from this inroad of the Goths the decline of the Greeks may be dated.

The greatest interest for us in the Constantinople of this inglorious period centres around S. John Chrysostom. It has been said that under the reign of Arcadius there were many converts to Christianity. So far as the emperor had a religion, he was orthodox ; but the life and increase of the church was due to the Archbishop Chrysostom. The people relied on him, and deemed him a prophet, while they loved him for his devotion to them and to his religion. That eloquence which won for him the title of "Golden-mouthed," held his listeners by a spell, and we can easily believe that his preaching converted many Pagans to the Christian religion.

But Chrysostom denounced the life of the court with such boldness and clearness as made him many enemies, among whom was the empress, — a woman whose ability and determination of character, together with her influence over her husband, made her a dangerous and powerful enemy. She feared the people too much, however, to show an open hostility to Chrysostom.

This wily woman profited by the instrumentality of Theophilus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, whose jealousy and hatred of Chrysostom were known to her. In 404 a synod was called, to meet in a suburb of Chalcedon, and Chrysostom was summoned before it on a charge of contumacy. As was easily to be foreseen, when the position and power of his accusers were considered, he was deposed from his office. The people were so excited and enraged by this act that a riot ensued, and the mob threatened the palace and the empress. Finally an earthquake occurred, which was believed to be a witness to the wrath of God. Even Eudoxia was terrified, and desired that Chrysostom should be restored to his archbishopric.



But the terrific boldness with which he now denounced the empress and the honours which were paid to her and to her statues, was certainly exasperating to any vain woman in her position. Such words as these, with which he is said to have begun a sermon, "Herodias again rages; once more she dances; once again she requires the head of John," proved too much for Eudoxia to bear, and in spite of her fears of the populace and of the judgments of God, she boldly instigated the second deposition of Chrysostom; and she did not again relent, although the day on which the bold preacher left the capital was marked by a serious disturbance of the people, and a conflagration, which destroyed the church of the Divine Wisdom and the Senate-house.

The calamities at Constantinople — the famines, fires, earthquakes, and flights of locusts, which rapidly followed each other — were believed to be divine punishments for the persecution of Chrysostom; and even the incursions of barbarous tribes, who spoiled the provinces of Asia Minor, and ravaged Syria and Palestine, were regarded as consequences of the same dreadful sin of the feeble emperor, of whom no single worthy or memorable deed has been recorded.

In 408 Arcadius died, leaving his kingdom to his son of eight years, who is known as Theodosius II., or the Younger, to distinguish him from his grandfather. His reign during the first half of the fifth century might better be called the reign of Pulcheria, his sister, whose influence was so complete over her weak and amiable brother that she was really responsible for whatever was done in his name.

The most masculine taste of this emperor was his love of hunting. He also spent much time in painting and carving, although his work showed no artistic talent. His one accomplishment was his penmanship; and he

illuminated manuscripts, which gained him the title of Kalligraphes, the fair writer. He so disliked all matters of business that he did not read the documents which he signed, and by this means enacted some cruel and unjust measures. The so-called Theodosian Code sheds lustre on this emperor's name; but we may well doubt if he knew of its existence. It was the inevitable result of the growing intelligence of his age in matters of government, and of the wisdom of his councillors.

The marriage of Theodosius, when about twenty years old, to Athenais, one of the most famous empresses of Constantinople, was arranged by Pulcheria, although the emperor was by no means averse to the beautiful Greek maiden, who was slightly his senior. When baptized, she took the name of Eudocia; but Pulcheria did not permit her the title of Augusta until after the birth of a child. Before her marriage Eudocia had been the intimate friend of, and probably a maid of honour to, Pulcheria for seven years; and so long as the empress was submissive to the will of her sister-in-law, all went well. Eudocia was a most accomplished scholar, and occupied herself in making a poetical paraphrase of a large portion of the Old Testament. She also wrote out the legend of S. Cyprian, and applied a portion of Homer's verses to the life and miracles of Christ. Naturally the work of an empress would be praised by her contemporaries, but that of Eudocia has been commended by critics of a later age. Unfortunately she wrote some most fulsome praises of her husband, in which she attributed to him qualities which he neither possessed nor desired, even calling him a brave warrior; but as this custom of flattering falsehood prevailed at the court of Theodosius, it should be offered as an excuse for the panegyrics of the empress, all the more as the emperor's affection for her was increased with the passage of years.

After her daughter was married to the emperor of the Western Empire, Eudocia made a royal progress to Jerusalem, which was called a pilgrimage for the discharge of grateful vows; but the splendour which attended the empress is better described by the first term we have used. For example, at Antioch, she pronounced an oration to the Senate from a throne of gold studded with gems, and declared her intention of enlarging the walls of the city. She donated two hundred pounds of gold to restore the baths, and accepted statues which were decreed to her. Her pious gifts in the Holy Land exceeded the munificence of S. Helena;<sup>1</sup> and although she secured and carried to Constantinople such treasures as the right arm of S. Stephen, the chains of S. Peter, and a picture of the Virgin painted by S. Luke, she might well have feared that she had incurred the anger of Pulcheria.

Having thus tasted the pleasure of power and pomp, she attempted, after her return, to assume the government of her husband's empire; and a genuine woman's war ensued in the palace, from which the pious virgin, Pulcheria, came out victorious. There was a great scandal of some sort, by which the affections of Theodosius were turned from Eudocia. The accounts of the matter are too involved to be clearly understood, but Eudocia revenged herself for the murder of some of her favourites by Pulcheria, by assassinating the agent who had been employed against her. Theodosius was induced to punish her with the greatest severity, and, stripped of her honours and disgraced before all the world, she passed the last sixteen years of her life in exile and prayer. The death of Theodosius and the captivity of her daughter added to the miseries of her condition, and she died at Jerusalem, when sixty-seven years old, protesting with her dying

<sup>1</sup> It is said that her gifts exceeded forty millions of dollars.

breath that she was innocent of any sin against her marriage vows or the authority of her husband.

The last years of the reign of Theodosius were occupied in a war with the Huns under the leadership of Attila. A terrible earthquake threw down a large part of the impregnable walls of Constantinople, and destroyed fifty-eight towers. At length a treaty was made, which deprived the emperor of a large proportion of his former territory, and he was personally subjected to the most humiliating conditions. Attila also exacted a large indemnity; and as the extravagances of the court had greatly reduced the vast wealth of the empire, the people who had anything remaining were forced to make immense sacrifices. The wealthy classes had indulged in marvellous expenditures. It was not unusual for them to be served from a large table of solid silver with a service of gold, while the women wore jewels of inestimable value. All these were sacrificed to satisfy the demands of "the Scourge" of God."

Theodosius did not long survive his humiliation, and was killed in the forty-third year of his reign by an accident when hunting. There are some redeeming features connected with the rule of Theodosius. While no great or brilliant deeds were achieved, and while the attacks of foes and the effects of desolating natural forces combined to reduce the empire in extent and importance, so well was the municipal system administered as to render the city perfectly safe at all hours. Legal, religious, and literary standards were set up, which exercised a potent influence in the progress of civilization, in spite of the enervating luxury of the rich, and the misery and poverty of the masses of the people. The legal rights of the lower classes received an unusual recognition in the Code of Theodosius II. The clergy were scholarly men, and held such relations with the people as made their teach-



ing and speculations interesting to all, and the discussions of theology and metaphysics occupied much of the time that in Rome was devoted to the debasing horrors of the gladiatorial arena.

The writers and artists of Constantinople during this period were not distinguished by genius, and indeed the circle that could be called literary was small; but a university was founded and maintained by the government. The professors were learned men, and after twenty years of service they were ennobled and received the title of "Count," while the officers of the civil service were all men who had held high rank at the university.

The period which elapsed between the death of Theodosius II. and the reign of the great Justinian was a time of much confusion in the Eastern Empire. Its history is obscure, and affords but little reliable information. There were five emperors, — Marcian, a soldier, whom Pulcheria associated with herself in the government, and for political purposes made nominally her husband, and invested with the purple. Marcian was at least a soldier; and when Attila demanded the tribute which Theodosius had promised, his successor replied, "I have iron for Attila, but no gold."

After seven years Marcian was succeeded by Leo, called "The Great," for no apparent reason. He met with sad reverses in his campaigns against the Vandals, and was followed by Zeno, a barbarian and heretic, who contended against Theodoric, the Goth, with some success. The widow of Zeno married Anastasius, who has been called the "prudent emperor." He was not only a skilful financier, but also a reformer; and Finlay, in his history, suggests that Anastasius prepared the way for some of the triumphs of Justinian. He built the great wall which extended from the Sea of Marmora to the Black Sea. Gibbon speaks of this defence as an acknowledgment of

the weakness of his army; but whatever was the motive in building it, it was an important factor in the preservation of civilization in Constantinople, and indeed for the world. Anastasius reigned twenty-seven years, and bequeathed his throne to a soldier, Justin, who, a Bulgarian peasant by birth, was a discreet, ignorant man, who by patient and prudent exercise of his native good judgment was able to secure the succession to his nephew, the famous Justinian.

## CHAPTER IV.

JUSTINIAN, HERACLIUS, CONSTANTINE IV., LEO THE ICONOCLAST, AND THE ISAURIAN DYNASTY.

527-867.

ONE can but wonder at the world-wide and enduring fame of the Emperor Justinian, when his life is regarded dispassionately; and yet one pays an involuntary tribute of respect to every human being who has secured his remembrance through more than thirteen centuries as a factor in that which makes the history of the world.

Justinian was fortunate in being served by men of unusual talent in various departments of his empire, and frankness must admit that this sovereign is distinguished by a reflected glory from the achievements of these servants rather than by any brilliancy of thought or deed on his own part. He owed his success in warfare and the increase of his territory to Belisarius and Narses, and the compilation of the Justinian Code to Tribonian and his collaborators,—the signature of his name to the completed whole being the chief part of the emperor in this great work; and he was even indebted to his infamous empress for courage under circumstances of personal danger.

Justinian, like his uncle Justin, was the son of a peasant, and was distinguished by no unusual personal qualities. Four months before Justin died, when he found the burden of the empire too great for his failing strength, he assembled the Patriarch and senators, and in their presence placed his diadem on the head of Justinian, who was at once joyfully received by the people as their future



emperor. His chief care at this moment of his elevation was to have an edict published by the dying emperor, which should make it possible for a woman of servile origin, or who had been dishonoured by a theatrical profession, to be raised to the throne. This edict was immediately followed by the marriage of Justinian and the atrocious Theodora; and Justin having invested his nephew with the insignia of his power, the Patriarch of Constantinople placed a diadem on the head of Theodora at the same time that he crowned her husband.

This empress was the daughter of a bear-tamer at Constantinople, and after his death she had made a great success as a pantomimist. She was possessed of a rare and delicate beauty of person, strongly inconsistent with her vileness of character. Her beauty made her vulgarity of tone and gesture singularly attractive at the theatre, where she exposed her charms with a freedom which cannot be described. Her life soon became the most licentious and abandoned that can be imagined, and she at length accompanied one of her lovers to Africa. She was deserted in Alexandria, where she suffered the bitterest poverty; but having a vision which prophesied her future greatness, she painfully made her way back to Constantinople, and there earned her living at some humble but honest occupation, in a small house, which she later converted into a splendid temple.

Upon her arrival in Constantinople, finding that the nephew of the emperor was already very powerful, and the prospective heir to the throne, she contrived to make his acquaintance, and soon held him under a spell of absolute fascination. Moreover, she succeeded in retaining his devoted affection, and cleverly excelled those of her class best known in history when she was raised to his throne. He delighted in doing her honour, so long as she lived, and lavished on her all the treasures of the Orient.

This empress passed much of her time in the palaces on the sea-coast, where she lived in a manner calculated to preserve her beauty. She surrounded herself with her favourites, and treated the patricians who sought her presence with arrogance or levity, as her mood might dictate. The two passions which she especially indulged were avarice and cruelty. She piled up wealth, which she secured principally through the fears of her subjects, for her cruelties were so dreaded as to compel assent to her most exorbitant demands. She employed spies, who reported everything that could possibly be considered an offence to her; and those who were thus accused were thrown into dungeons, of which she was sole mistress. Some of these unfortunates never saw the light again, while others were permitted to return to their friends void of reason, or maimed and disfigured for life. It is recorded that she did not hesitate to witness the most frightful tortures and scourgings, and guarded against any neglect of her orders by threatening her minions with the same punishments which she administered to others, if they dared disobey her mandates.

One worthy deed may be ascribed to her. She founded, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, an extensive monastery, where five hundred women who were leading the life from which she had escaped, were comfortably, even liberally, maintained.

From the time of her marriage she was a virtuous wife, and held her dominion over her husband's affections to the moment of their final separation. At length her failing health compelled her to seek relief from suffering, and she journeyed to the Pythian baths. Her train numbered four thousand attendants, and she was accompanied by a goodly number of patricians. She travelled in great luxury, and distributed large sums to churches, monasteries, and hospitals, imploring prayers for her recovery;

but she died of an incurable cancer twenty-four years after her marriage.

In the fifth year of Justinian's reign a sedition arose which terrified the emperor, and but for the influence of Theodora, he would have succumbed to his fear of the mob. The trouble arose in the serious differences between the charioteers in the Circus, which so extended to the whole people as to involve religious and political questions, as well as those of the games. The opposing parties were known as the "Blues" and the "Greens," from the colours worn by the charioteers. Justinian belonged to the Blues, — the orthodox party, and the stronger, who made such serious attacks upon the Greens that they were in danger of extermination.

At the celebration of the games on the Ides of January, both parties being in presence of the emperor, the Greens took occasion to appeal to him, to complain of their abuses, and demand justice. Justinian answered them with severity, calling them "Jews, Samaritans, and Manichæans." Excited to the last degree by these insults, the Greens cursed the emperor and the hour of his birth, renounced their allegiance to him, and fled from the Circus through the streets, to the alarm of the whole people. The Blues pursued them, and but for an accidental meeting with seven criminals, who were being taken to execution, a frightful massacre would have ensued.

It chanced that five of these criminals were executed immediately, and the remaining two were hanged; but the rope broke, and they were saved from again falling into the hands of the executioner by some monks, who conveyed them to the sanctuary of the church. One of these assassins wore blue, the other green livery; and this happening was sufficient to unite the two bitter factions in the work of opening the prisons, burning the house of

the prefect, and killing his officers. The troops sent to quell the riot were overpowered. Stones were hurled on them by women on the roofs. Fires were set, and the church of S. Sophia and many other splendid edifices were destroyed, and an immense treasure in precious metals melted or stolen. The watchword *Nika* (conquer) gave a name to this sedition, which endured five days. Justinian endeavoured, by temporizing, to allay the trouble which he had imprudently caused. He went to the Hippodrome to address the people; but they distrusted his sincerity, and their clamour so alarmed him that he fled to his palace, having accomplished nothing.

The Greens then seized Hypatius, a nephew of the Emperor Anastasius, carried him to the Forum of Constantine, and crowned him with a richly jewelled collar. The cowardly emperor proposed to fly with the imperial treasures; but Theodora, in the midst of the council, exclaimed, —

“If flight were the only means of safety, yet I should disdain to fly. Death is the condition of our birth, but they who have reigned should never survive the loss of dignity and dominion. I implore Heaven that I may never be seen, not a day, without my diadem and purple; that I may no longer behold the light when I cease to be saluted with the name of queen. If you resolve, O Cæsar! to fly, you have treasures; behold the sea, you have ships; but tremble lest the desire of life should expose you to wretched exile and ignominious death. For my own part, I adhere to the maxim of antiquity, that the throne is a glorious sepulchre.”

The jealousy of the Blues was easily revived, and the Greens were left to support Hypatius alone. This afforded Justinian an opportunity for a terrible revenge. Two divisions of soldiers were sent to the Hippodrome. The opposite gates were burst open at the same moment, and



a merciless carnage ensued, in which the Blues participated to emphasize their repentance. Thirty thousand Greens were murdered, and the Hippodrome was closed for years. When again opened, the same quarrels were revived, and the empire was long disturbed by the Blue and Green factions.

Any proper relation of the story of the wars which occurred in the reign of Justinian would require more space than we can give. It includes many notable adventures and deeds of both men and women, and is a most interesting portion of Gibbon's fascinating history; but we can merely say that the great general, Belisarius, was successful in destroying the Vandals. He added Africa to the empire, saved Constantinople from the Bulgarians, overcame Italy, and raised the siege of Rome. And another most illustrious soldier, Narses, the eunuch, defeated the Goths, Franks, and Alemanni, and governed Italy as exarch.

During this reign, too, the capital was adorned by splendid edifices, and the long wall of Anastasius was rebuilt. The old Byzantine palace was repaired, and the exquisite summer palace of Heræum was erected, and surrounded with its delicious gardens, on the Asiatic shore, near Chalcedon. It was the delight of poets to praise this palace, but Gibbon tells us a strange tale of it. He says that the "nymphs" there were constantly alarmed by a whale, "the famous Porphyrio," of enormous size, who was stranded at the mouth of the river Sangaris, having infested the neighbouring seas for more than fifty years.

But of greater interest to all men for all time is the Corpus of Jurisprudence, which bears the name of Justinian. This work was done, at the command of the emperor, by Tribonian and nine other learned men. When completed and signed by the emperor, it was dili-

gently copied by scribes, and distributed all over the empire, while other learned scribes were employed in making the Pandects or Digest of the Code, to which the Institutes were added, and these three made the system of civil jurisprudence for the empire. These were the only text-books for the study of law, and the only authority for the decisions of the tribunals. Justinian claimed that he had been inspired by the Deity to undertake this great work, and by the aid of the Deity alone was enabled to accomplish it.

The solitary copy of the Pandects, which is the pride of the Laurentian Library in Florence, is said to have been found at Amalfi in 1137. It had long been supposed to be lost, and was considered by the Pisans as one of the greatest treasures of their conquest. In 1406, when Pisa was taken by the Florentines, this wonderful manuscript was placed under a jealous guard in the Palazzo Vecchio. At Florence the Pandects were bound in purple, and enclosed in a rich casket, which was sometimes opened for distinguished travellers, when this precious possession was shown by monks or magistrates with bared heads, holding tapers in their hands.

Pope Leo X. bestowed the Pandects on his nephew, the Duke of Urbino; but in 1786 it was returned to Florence, and consigned to the library above the cloisters of San Lorenzo. For a long time it was thought to be one of two copies which were sent to Italy by Justinian himself; but it is more probably a copy made by Greek scribes not later than the beginning of the seventh century, and many authorities believe it to have been the only authentic source from which all existing written and printed copies have been made.

Justinian died at eighty-three, having reigned thirty-nine years; and no estimate of the character of this renowned man can equal that of Gibbon:—



“The resemblance of Justinian to the bust of Domitian is maliciously urged, with the acknowledgment, however, of a well-proportioned figure, a ruddy complexion, and a pleasing countenance. The emperor was easy of access, patient of hearing, courteous and affable in discourse, and a master of the angry passions which rage with such destructive violence in the breast of a despot. Procopius praises his temper, to reproach him with calm and deliberate cruelty; but in the conspiracies which attacked his authority and person, a more candid judge will approve the justice, or admire the clemency, of Justinian. He excelled in the private virtues of chastity and temperance; but the impartial love of beauty would have been less mischievous than his conjugal tenderness for Theodora; and his abstemious diet was regulated, not by the prudence of a philosopher, but the superstition of a monk. His repasts were short and frugal: on solemn feasts he contented himself with water and vegetables; and such was his strength as well as fervour, that he frequently passed two days, and as many nights, without tasting food. The measure of his sleep was not less rigorous: after the repose of a single hour, the body was awakened by the soul, and, to the astonishment of his chamberlains, Justinian walked or studied till the morning light. . . . The emperor professed himself a musician and architect, a poet and philosopher, a lawyer and theologian; and if he failed in the enterprise of reconciling the Christian sects, the review of the Roman jurisprudence is a noble monument of his spirit and industry. In the government of the empire he was less wise, or less successful: the age was unfortunate; the people was oppressed and discontented; Theodora abused her power; a succession of bad ministers disgraced his judgment; and Justinian was neither beloved in his life nor regretted at his death. The love of fame was deeply implanted in his breast, but he condescended to the poor ambition of titles, honours, and contemporary praise; and while he laboured to fix the admiration, he forfeited the esteem and affection of the Romans. The design of the African and Italian wars was boldly conceived and executed; and his penetration discovered the talents of Belisarius in the

camp, of Narses in the palace. . . . The characters of Philip the Second and Justinian are distinguished by the cold ambition which delights in war and declines the danger of the field. Yet a colossal statue of bronze represented the emperor on horseback, preparing to march against the Persians in the habit and armour of Achilles. In the great square before the church of S. Sophia, this monument was raised on a brass column and a stone pedestal of seven steps; and the pillar of Theodosius, which weighed seven thousand four hundred pounds of silver, was removed from the same place by the avarice and vanity of Justinian. Future princes were more just or indulgent to *his* memory; the elder Andronicus, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, repaired and beautified his equestrian statue: since the fall of the empire it has been melted into cannon by the victorious Turks."

It is said that during the sacrilegious ravages which followed the Latin conquest of Constantinople, when the tombs of the emperors in the church of the Apostles were rifled, the corpse of Justinian was found, and the six centuries that had elapsed since his burial had produced no signs of decay.

The inroads of enemies during the reign of Justinian — of Bulgarians, Goths, Vandals, and Persians — were unimportant, beside the ruin which was wrought by earthquakes, famine, and pestilence. In the fifth year of his reign, a comet blazed in the sky, striking terror to the hearts of the people; and each succeeding year was marked by earthquakes, and Constantinople, on one occasion, trembled for forty successive days, while cities not far away were swallowed up, and millions of lives were lost; but these catastrophes paled before the horrors of the plague. By this curse whole districts were depopulated, the harvests were not made, and the fruits not gathered from trees and vines. Even Defoe's descriptions of the London plague are scarcely sufficient in their frightful

details to picture the results of this Oriental spotted typhus. During three months five, and sometimes ten, thousand victims, died daily, and more than a half-century passed before it could be said to be entirely extinguished.

The immediate followers of Justinian upon the throne of Constantinople — Justin II., Tiberius II., Maurice, and Phocas — only plunged the capital and a large portion of the empire into hopeless weakness and misery; and Heraclius, on his accession in 610, assumed the government of a country overwhelmed with debt. The agricultural classes were in a condition of disheartening poverty and misery. From high to low a hopeless discontent prevailed. Enemies were threatening on every side; and yet the people would take any possible means to avoid entering the army, from which the soldiers were constantly deserting to become monks, or to follow any calling that would save them from fighting for their country.

Africa alone, of all the Byzantine possessions, was prosperous; and Heraclius even proposed to desert the city of the Bosphorus, and establish a new capital at Carthage. This proposal, however, awakened the remnants of patriotism in the hearts of his subjects, and the Patriarch, at the head of the people, called the emperor to meet him in S. Sophia, when an oath that he would abandon this idea was exacted from him.

The history of the reign of Heraclius cannot be given here in detail, although his wars against the Persian Chosroes are full of interest not unmingled with romance.

After long and severe struggles, in which he displayed almost miraculous determination and perseverance, as well as great personal endurance and bravery, Heraclius was victorious over the Persians, and on his return to Constantinople — his journey being a perpetual triumph

— he was received with acclamations of joy, and entered the capital in a chariot drawn by elephants. He had rescued the wood of the True Cross from the keeping of Chosroes, and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to restore the sacred object to the Holy Sepulchre. On his return, he devoted his remaining years to the attempt to establish a religious and a patriotic sentiment among his subjects. But the innumerable discussions which arose, and the emperor's Ecthesis failed of their object, and he died, leaving new disputes to his family and his people.

During the thirty years that succeeded the death of Heraclius, there is little to interest us in the story of Constantinople, and we pass to the first siege of the capital by the Saracens, which occurred during the reign of Constantine IV. about the year 673. It was known that the Arabs had contemplated this attack for some years, and the superstitious fears of the people were aroused by certain signs, which they regarded as precursors of serious evils; and had the Saracens acted promptly, the mental condition of the people of Constantinople would have been to their advantage.

But their delay afforded the opportunity for Callinicus, a Syrian, to make his way to the capital, and offer to the emperor a discovery which he had made, that would surely enable Constantine to defeat his foes, and drive them from his kingdom. This proved to be the terrible Greek Fire. It could be projected on objects near at hand or at a distance, and would burn on water as readily as on land, or on stone or iron as disastrously as on a substance which could be ignited. In short, it was the most terrific and destructive agent then known to man.

The fleet of the Saracens passed the Dardanelles without opposition, and invested the city, and so numerous were the ships that it was surrounded on three sides. With them were three of the special friends of the Prophet, and



the commanders and soldiers alike believed that the presence of these holy men assured the success of their undertaking. Moreover, it had been promised that any who fell in taking Constantinople should be forgiven all their sins and at once enter Paradise.

The proof that death in this war opened an easy path to Moslem sainthood may be seen to-day in Constantinople, in the tomb of Abu Ayoob, or Job, who fell in this siege. The place of his burial was revealed to Mohammed II. in a vision. It has been surrounded by gardens and cemeteries, in which are many dark cypresses. Above the tomb now rises a mosque of white marble, where the Sultans are installed in their high office. It is a place much desired for burial by the Moslems, and the tombs in its cemeteries are remarkable for their richness of decoration. No Christian is permitted to reside in this suburb nor to enter this mosque.

The Greek fire proved so effectual in preventing the near approach of the vessels, and in blinding the men who attempted to scale the walls, that after five months the Saracens retired. They seized Cyzicus, where they remained until the next spring, when a second ineffectual attack was made. This experience was repeated each year for seven years, and meantime they lost many ships. Their engines were so disabled that they had to be rebuilt annually, and yet their determination held out; but in the seventh year they were attacked by a pestilence, which utterly disheartened them.

So many of their vessels were lost or rendered useless, that in order to retreat, those that remained were much overcrowded, and still great numbers were left to make their way on foot. The vessels, with all on board, were lost in a great storm, while the land army, footsore, wounded, and starving, were pursued by the emperor's forces and mercilessly slaughtered.

Passing over years of troublous confusion, in which six emperors were dethroned and five executed or blinded, one only being allowed to exist in a monastery, we come to the reign of Leo the Iconoclast, and founder of the Isaurian dynasty. He was of humble origin, and held his first prominent position as commander of the Anatolian Province. During his rise from obscurity, the Eastern Empire was in a desperate condition. It was to be expected that when rulers followed each other in quick succession, disorder should prevail in all departments. The army was constantly in revolt. The Saracens had extended their rule from Spain to Scinde and Cashgar, and being in possession of the city opposite Constantinople, on the Bosphorus, they anticipated but little difficulty in overthrowing the last stronghold of the empire, under the very walls of which the Bulgarians had already committed depredations.

When Moslemah, the brother of the Caliph Suleiman, besieged Amorium, preparatory to approaching Constantinople, Leo had his first opportunity to show his bravery and military prowess. It was vastly important that he should gain time for the defence of the city, and taking but five hundred horsemen with him, he rode to the enemy's camp, and persuaded the general in charge to suspend the attack until he (Leo) could consult Moslemah on important matters. He also contrived to meet secretly the Bishop of Amorium, and command him to maintain sturdily the defence of his town. Leo then begged the Saracen general to conduct him to Moslemah, and the general, thinking that he should thus be able to make Leo a prisoner, consented to his request; but when a narrow defile was reached, from which a road led to the camp of the Greek army, Leo and his men suddenly drew their swords, cut their way through the Saracens, and escaped in safety.



According to a frequent usage of the age, the siege of Amorium having been raised, Leo was made emperor, as a reward for his personal bravery. To obtain possession of his throne, he was obliged to defeat Theodosius III., whom he consigned to a monastery. Then entering the city triumphantly by the Golden Gate, he was crowned by the Patriarch in the church of S. Sophia in March, 717.

The Saracens now knew that in the ruler at Constantinople they had a foe worthy of their steel, and they determined to make another attempt to conquer the capital before Leo should have time to strengthen his fortifications and increase his army. Their preparations were made on an enormous scale. Eighteen hundred ships were sent out to prevent succour or food from reaching Constantinople by sea, while 180,000 soldiers were ordered to invest the city by land. The accounts of this siege are so fragmentary that no form can be confidently given it; but the result was an utter defeat of the Moslems, greatly to the glory of Leo.

The ships of the Saracens were burned; the Caliph died. As winter came on, the Moslems succumbed to the cold in great numbers, and they, rather than their enemies, were in want of food. The ships sent to their aid were principally manned by Christians, who thought it best to join the winning side, and thus strengthened Leo, and disclosed to him the desperate condition of his besiegers. After the siege had continued eighteen months, the Saracens withdrew. But five of their ships ever returned to Syria, and only the barest remnant of their army saw Damascus again.

Our knowledge of this memorable siege seems to indicate that Leo was "lucky" rather than great. He was an adventurer who had seized a throne. He did little but sit still within his well-supplied capital, and permit the cold of an unaccustomed climate to work its fatal effect on the

poorly fed Moslems. However, the result was a tremendous fact in the history of the world, for after this defeat centuries elapsed before the Saracens were again a terror to Constantinople.

Leo also checked the ravages of other enemies who had raided his territory, even to his very gates, and having quieted his foes, he so wisely administered his finances and reformed his army, as to secure the independence of his empire, and win the approval and admiration of all classes save one.

The priests hated him because he opposed the idolatry which had crept into the Church. The people knew nothing of God or Christ, or of anything that merited the name of religion, which was alone represented by the kissing of pictures, by reliance on the images of saints, and other idolatrous practices. Against all this Leo waged a bold crusade. He first ordered all religious pictures to be hung so high that they could not be kissed, which aroused such resentment, not only in the capital, but also among the islands of the archipelago, that a fleet was sent to attack Constantinople, which was soon completely defeated.

Leo convoked an assembly of the highest officials of both Church and State; and a decree was solemnly made, ordering all images to be removed from the churches of the empire. Pope Gregory II. then issued a bull excommunicating all iconoclasts; but Leo gave no heed to proclamations from Rome, and thus was the schism originated which steadily widened the breach between the Eastern and Western churches; and after the election of Gregory III., Constantinople was never again included among the powers who were asked for a confirmation of the election of a pope.

Both Leo and his son, Constantine V., have been called everything but good by Church historians, on account of their attempts to abolish idolatry; but historical truth, so

far as it is known, affords a widely differing estimate of these Isaurian emperors.

During the continuance of the Isaurian dynasty — until 867 — history constantly repeats itself, alternating between iconoclasm and religious liberalism, or between indifference and the most abject image worship and idolatry. Horrible cruelties and frightful crimes were constantly perpetrated in the name of religion.

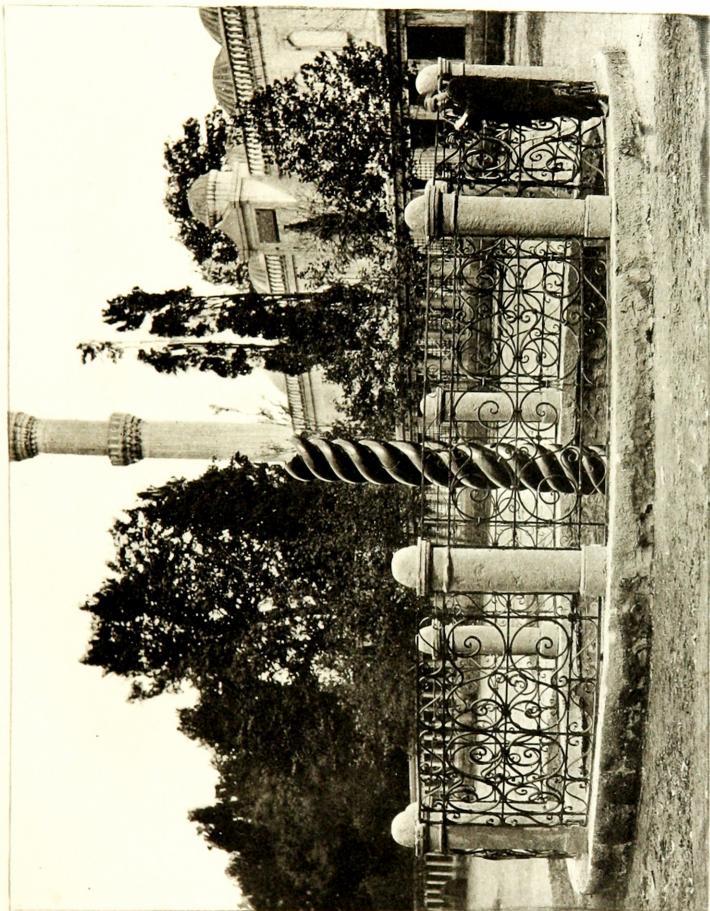
Historians differ widely in their estimate of the government of the empire at this period. Finlay says:—

“ The regularity of its civil, financial, and judicial administration, the defensive power of its military and naval establishments, are remarkable in an age of temporary measures and universal aggression. The state of education and the moral position of the clergy certainly offer favourable points of comparison, even with the brilliant empires of Haroun Al Raschid and Charlemagne. . . . The first step towards the constitution of modern society, which renders all equal in the eye of the law, was made at Constantinople about the commencement of the eighth century.”

The attacks of the Bulgarians were repelled, and the sieges of the Saracens were fruitless. Almost without exception the Isaurian emperors were soldiers, and most of them experienced generals. During the eighth and ninth centuries Constantinople was the centre of the commerce of Europe, and the wealth of the capital was almost fabulous. At one time there was a sum in the imperial treasury which cannot be estimated at less than twenty-six millions of dollars, which at that age of the world was far more valuable than in our own day, and the enormous expenditures of the wealthy classes, and the magnificence in which they lived, as it is recounted by creditable historians, proves that their wealth was even “beyond the dreams of avarice.”



*Serpentine Column in the Hippodrome.*







The moral condition of the Byzantine Empire under the Isaurians cannot be judged by the standards of a more general and progressive civilization; but it was superior to that of any preceding age when applied to the same number of people, and its moral tone was undoubtedly a great factor in its preservation. At this period, too, slavery was much less than it had formerly been. Hospitals and other philanthropic institutions were founded, and, in short, at this time the foundations were being laid for the greatness of the succeeding dynasty.

Science, literature, and art were cultivated. Grammar, poetry, rhetoric, philosophy, and the pure sciences were all studied by Leo the Archbishop. The wonderfully beautiful jewelry and the exquisitely illuminated parchments of the ninth century excite our wonder and admiration, and we cannot doubt that the larger works of the painter and statuary equalled these in excellence.

Such subjects as these, at which we have but hinted, are too great, and require too much space for any proper consideration here; but when one reads of the frightful crimes, the jealousies and the horrors on one side of the picture of ancient Constantinople, it is a pleasure to look for a moment on the more cheerful view, as presented by some of the most reliable authorities.

## CHAPTER V.

### MACEDONIAN AND COMNENAN DYNASTIES — DECADENCE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

867-1203.

WHILE Michael the Drunkard amused himself in his dissolute fashion, a boy was growing up in his army, who was destined to be the murderer and successor of this last of the Iconoclasts, as well as the founder of a new dynasty.

This boy, Basil, was the son of a Macedonian herdsman. He was stolen by Bulgarians, and carried to their country, where, on hard fare and in a wild life, he developed into a handsome, fearless youth, skilful in all the sports and arts of half-barbaric nations. How he reached Constantinople is a mystery; but there he entered the military service, and went to the Peloponnesus under the command of a cousin of the emperor. At Patras he fell sick with a fever. His beauty and grace attracted the attention of an old lady of immense wealth, who so lavished her gifts on this young soldier of fortune that he was able to maintain a creditable appearance at the luxurious court of Constantinople.

After this access of riches, Basil announced that he was descended from the ancient Parthian kings. Whether he believed this or not, it added to his consideration, and on his return to Constantinople he made himself so acceptable to the emperor as a companion in his revels and a dexterous tamer of horses, as well as a successful wrestler,

that Michael demanded his constant attendance on him, and soon bestowed some of the highest offices in his court on this young favourite.

There was a second courtier who was also high in the emperor's favour, Symbatios; and at first Basil found it to his advantage to be friendly with him, and the two soon joined in accusing Bardas, the uncle of the emperor, of unfaithfulness. At first Michael gave no heed to these accusations; but when Bardas, in the emperor's tent, advised his nephew to undertake a war to which he was not inclined, the two favourites murdered the old man in the presence of the emperor. When Michael returned to his palace, a monk greeted him thus: "All hail, emperor! all hail from your glorious campaign! You return covered with blood, and it is your own!"

Shortly after this, Michael made Basil his colleague on the throne, completely overlooking Symbatios, who had hoped for some reward for assisting in the murder of his father-in-law, Bardas. In revenge Symbatios persuaded a general, Peganus, to a revolt. It was unsuccessful, and both Peganus and Symbatios were maimed and blinded, and placed as beggars before one of the imperial palaces. As it is impossible to verify the story, so often told, of this fate having fallen on Belisarius, it has been suspected that it arose from the punishment of these two unfortunate rebels.

Michael was soon seized with fear lest Basil should dethrone him, and took a second colleague, one Basiliskios. Such a trinity could not long exist; and Basil, being the coolest and most cunning, awaited his opportunity to murder the other two, and while they were sunk in the deep sleep of drunkenness, he despatched them both, and thus, in a most ungrateful murder, founded the Macedonian dynasty. There could be little hope of a wise and successful reign under a sovereign who had dishonoured

the sister, and married the mistress, of his patron, before brutally murdering him, when he was unable to make the least resistance.

To these crimes Basil added sacrilege by pretending to deep piety. At his coronation, kneeling before the altar, he proclaimed that he dedicated his own life and his empire to God's service, and followed this by calling a general council of the Church, at which no reconciliation with Rome was accomplished.

Basil found an empty treasury; but desiring to be popular, and having a certain sympathy for the lower classes, from which he had risen, he determined not to increase the taxes. By resuming the enormous grants which Michael had lavished on his favourites, the imperial purse was filled; and this policy proved so popular that it was followed by each new emperor for more than a century.

Basil energetically pushed the revision of the law, and devoted himself to the proper maintenance and discipline of his army, and so insured the power and popularity of his government that he was able to found the dynasty which held the throne of Constantinople longer than any other.

As a general, he was energetic and efficient, but not always successful. He re-conquered Cyprus, but lost it again; and though he acquired new power in Italy, he lost Syracuse. His principal wars were against the Saracens and Paulicians; and if he was not a great conqueror, he did not suffer signal defeats.

Naturally this emperor was not fitted to take any active part in the legislation of his empire; but through a discreet employment of jurisconsults, he at length was able to publish the *Basilika*, which continued in use among the Greeks until their conquest by the Ottomans. Finlay says:—



“The promulgation of the Basilika may be considered as marking the complete union of all legislative, executive, judicial, financial, and administrative power in the person of the emperor. The Church had already been reduced to complete submission to the imperial authority. Basil may therefore claim to be the emperor who established arbitrary despotism as the constitution of the Roman Empire. The divine right of the sovereign to rule as God might be pleased to enlighten his understanding and soften his heart, was henceforth the recognized organic law of the Byzantine Empire.”

The friendship of the old lady of Patras — Danielis by name — for Basil is the most interesting circumstance of his private life. It was natural that she should wish to see her *protégé* after he became emperor. He had sent for her son, and given him an official position at the capital; and when he invited the old lady to visit his court, she set off in a luxurious litter borne on the shoulders of ten slaves, and followed by three hundred other attendants. Arrived at Constantinople, she was lodged in the princely palace, Magnaura, where royal guests were entertained, and astonished the inhabitants by the magnificence of the presents she had brought to Basil, which far excelled those that had been bestowed by foreign sovereigns on any emperor.

The slaves that bore the gifts were of great beauty and accomplishments, and were a portion of the present. They numbered four hundred young men, one hundred maidens, and one hundred eunuchs. Danielis also brought a service of plates, cups, and dishes of gold and silver; a hundred pieces of the richest coloured draperies, and the same amount of soft woollen cloth, of linen, and of a cambric so fine that each piece could be enclosed in the joint of a reed.

Basil had built a splendid church, as an atonement for the murder of the Emperor Michael, which so touched the heart of Danielis that she sent to the Peloponnesus for



rich carpets of enormous size to protect the magnificent mosaic of the pavement. A peacock with outspread tail, which decorated one of these rugs, was the admiration of all who saw its brilliant colouring.

Before leaving Constantinople, Danielis settled a large property in Greece upon Basil and her son jointly; and after Basil's death, her son having also died, she again visited the capital, and made Leo, the son of her favourite, her sole heir. At her death the officers of the empire were amazed at her wealth. "The quantity of gold coin, gold and silver plate, works of art in bronze, furniture, rich stuffs in linen, cotton, wool, and silk, cattle and slaves, palaces and farms, formed an inheritance that enriched even an emperor of Constantinople."<sup>1</sup> The slaves were so numerous that Leo ordered three thousand to be freed, and settled on land which they cultivated as serfs; and when all legacies were paid, and the estate settled according to the testament of the old lady, the emperor had received eighty villages.

An accident in the hunting-field brought on a fever, from which Basil died; and consistently with his cowardly nature, he ended his life as he had begun it, with the murder of one who had conferred a benefit on him. His victim was the servant who had saved his life by cutting his girdle free from the stag that had thrust his antler into it, and dragged Basil from his horse.

Leo VI., known as the Philosopher, succeeded to the throne of his father, and reigned during twenty-five years, which brought great misfortunes to the empire. The Saracens took the city of Thessalonica, and carried twenty-two thousand of its people into hopeless slavery. The Bulgarians also defeated Leo's army, and perpetrated terrible cruelties on his soldiers, while his Asiatic frontiers were constantly besieged.

<sup>1</sup> Finlay.

Leo VI. was succeeded by his son, Constantine VII., who was so young that his mother, the Empress Zoe, became regent. After many disturbances, the boy emperor was married to the daughter of the Admiral Romanus, who then became the real head of the government, and made Constantine the fifth wheel of the chariot of state. But the interest of the emperor was centred in books, music, and art, and he made no attempt to govern his empire, and was more popular than any other Byzantine ruler. His writings afford the best history of his time, and he caused an encyclopedia of historical knowledge to be compiled under his oversight.

Constantine VII. was succeeded by his son Romanus II.; and he, dying at twenty-five, — after having recovered the island of Crete from the Saracens, and being full of plans for the glory of his country, — was followed by Nicephorus Phocas. This emperor was of irreproachable morals, of cold disposition, and miserly habits. He was most unpopular, and after six years was murdered by his nephew, John Zimiskes, who became emperor, and is remembered for the single important circumstance of his reign, — a successful war against Russia.

Zimiskes was succeeded on the throne of the Eastern Empire by men and women who claimed to be its rulers, on grounds of greater or less reason; but their dissolute lives and shameless disregard of religion and virtue make a story more honoured in the omission than in the telling. In 1057 the Macedonian dynasty came to an end, and was succeeded by that of the Comnenans.

During centuries of misgovernment the central strength of the Eastern Empire had grown less and less, and the capital was no longer regarded with pride or affection by the better part of its people. Every department of the government had fallen into incompetent hands. No council of state existed, and many ancient usages were

abandoned, — such, for example, as the census-making, which had formerly occurred every fifth year. Even the possibility of this was doubtful, as the once excellent roads to the distant provinces were now impassable. Money that had been devoted to the maintenance of harbours and the outposts of the empire, was now lavished on the palace and its pageants. The Hippodrome had become luxurious and magnificent in the extreme, and the Church excited the pride and admiration of the people by its splendours, while no attempt was made to arouse religious emotions. In short, both in the capital and in the outlying country, where agriculture was at its lowest ebb, the conditions were equally ruinous.

During this period of decadence had arisen a class of citizens who earnestly desired a stronger and more reputable government. They were men of great wealth, who, disgusted by the conditions that they could not remedy, had withdrawn from the court, and lived on their estates in lordly independence. These aristocrats now endeavoured to establish a better government, with a fixed order of succession; and so well did they make their plans, that a single battle placed them in power, and the first Comnenan ruler was raised to the throne, while his subjects hoped for an improvement in the empire which was never realized.

The great Byzantine families claimed descent from Roman ancestors. The Comnenans were of this class, and had large possessions on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus. They had been little known in public life. Manuel Comnenus had been a favourite at the court of Basil II., and the aristocrats had chosen his son, Isaac, as their emperor. His reign began in 1057, and in the two short years of its continuance he made a brave attempt to reform the abuses which had preceded him; but with his successors, the old conditions returned, and during the cen-

tury and a half which followed the fall of the Macedonian dynasty, the story of Constantinople was one of increasing weakness and decay, which can best be told, for our purpose, by the mention of a few important facts, rather than by a detailed account of its disintegration.

During the last half of the eleventh century the great movement of the Crusades was inaugurated, and exercised a world-wide influence. Pilgrims to the Holy Land had traversed Constantinople or its provinces in great numbers before the actual organization of crusades. One band of seven thousand, led by the Archbishop of Mentz, passed through the capital in 1064. It will readily be seen that such armies must have been a heavy tax on the inhabitants along their line of travel. An itinerary still exists, showing the route from Bordeaux to Jerusalem by way of Constantinople, which was made as a guide to pilgrims as early as the fourth century, and was used by vast numbers during the succeeding age of pilgrimages and crusades.

For a time the leaders of these movements showed some respect to the Byzantine Empire because it was a Christian state; "but when ambition and fashion, rather than religious feeling, led men to the holy wars, the Eastern Christians suffered more from the Crusaders than the Mohammedans." <sup>1</sup>

The increasing power of the Saracens in the eleventh century, and their persecutions of the pilgrims to Jerusalem, aroused the indignation of all Europe, and even Pope Gregory VII. contemplated leading a crusade in person. At length, one army after another was gathered under princely leaders, and marched through Byzantine territory, prepared to seize what they wished, if not granted them. The emperors speeded them on their way as soon as possible, promising supplies and protection, and rejoicing when

<sup>1</sup> Finlay.



these hordes had crossed the narrow sea to the Asiatic shore, where weary deserts and summer heats, as well as Saracen enemies, worked their fatal effects on the men of northern climes. Wars arose between the later Crusaders and the Eastern Christians, from which endless confusion and difficulties resulted. A most important measure of the Comnenan dynasty was the making of commercial treaties with the Venetians, Genoese, and Pisans, by which they were granted extensive privileges. The Venetians were especially favoured, and were permitted free trade in all kinds of merchandise in all parts of the empire south of the Black Sea. In fact, this people soon had a monopoly of trade, which was resented, not only by the merchants of Constantinople, but by those of other Italian cities as well. Another remarkable privilege which was bestowed on the Venetians was the right to levy a tribute on the Amalphians who had settled at Constantinople. The best wharves, too, were devoted to the Venetians; and being thus favoured, they became so overbearing that it was soon necessary to limit their ever-encroaching power.

To do this, treaties were made with other commercial cities, thus playing one against another. The Pisans were granted privileges far less important than those of the Venetians, but still such as enabled them to build up a trade which partially neutralized the Venetian monopoly.

Finally, the Genoese were more liberally treated, though obliged to pay a duty of four per cent on both exports and imports. They were allowed a khan on the Stamboul side of the Golden Horn, and a quarter on the opposite shore, which gradually developed into the important suburb of Galata.

As might have been foreseen, there were constant rivalries and disturbances among these Italian traders. The



Pisans were especially troublesome. At times these colonists combined in order to inflict some injury upon the Eastern Empire. Again, they quarrelled with each other, and not infrequently they were expelled from the country, although new treaties were soon made, and they were permitted to return.

The outcome of all this was mutual distrust between all parties concerned; and as the Byzantine government was constantly declining, the Italians grew bolder, and revenged themselves for any real or alleged wrongs, by ravaging the coasts and islands of the empire, which were sadly unprotected by the inefficient Byzantine marine. Pisan and Genoese pirates boldly committed their depredations on the *Ægean* Sea, and even seized Venetian vessels, which caused great trouble for the emperors, who were utterly unable to prevent these outrages. Curiously enough, all differences were forgotten at times, and the three Italian powers united to commit piracies on the coasts of the empire, meantime maintaining a strict neutrality at the capital.

The state of Constantinople and of the whole empire grew more and more hopeless, and the way was fully prepared for its conquest by any powerful nation. All officials, and even members of the imperial family, were easily bribed. The stores of the fleet were boldly sold by the admiral. Pirates flourished on all the surrounding seas, and even the Emperor Alexius III. sent out privateers on his own account. Wealthy citizens were kidnapped, and large ransoms demanded for their freedom. Venetians and Pisans fought in the streets of the capital, which was threatened by Bulgarians and other enemies without, and the whole empire was rapidly falling to pieces.

To all these depressing conditions the splendour, luxury, and gaiety of the court afforded a striking contrast. The

Empress Euphrosyne was the moving spirit in the affairs of the empire, as well as in the pleasures of the nobles, over whom her beauty and her talents obtained a powerful influence.

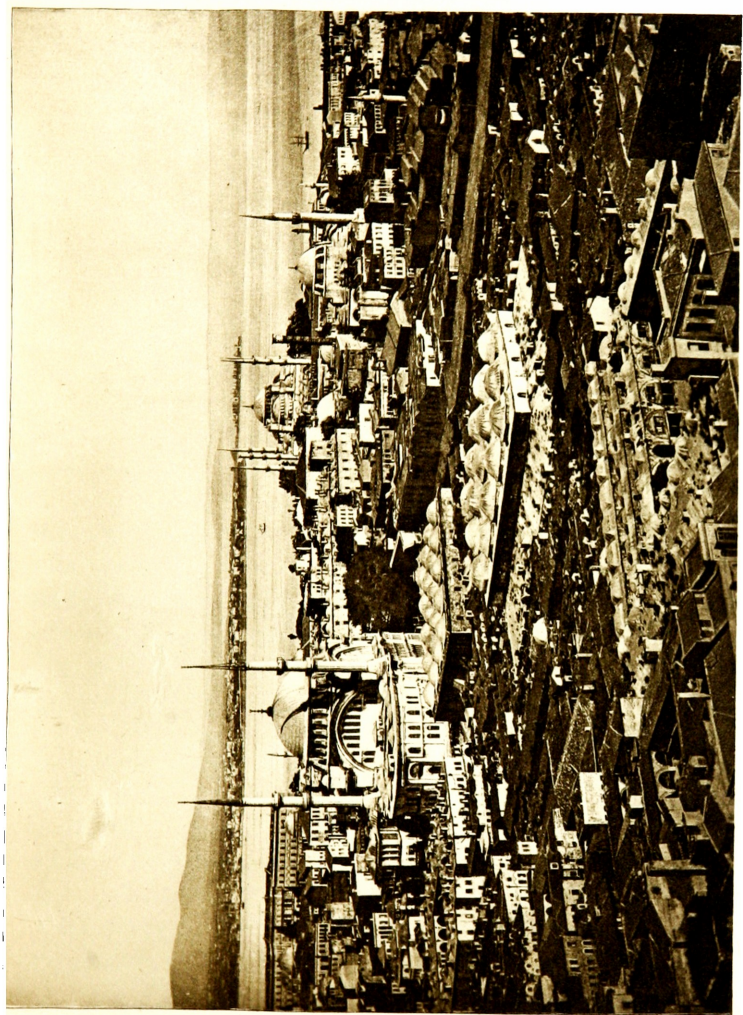
“ Her political energy, her superstitious follies, and her magnificent hunting-parties excited the wonder of the inhabitants of Constantinople; and as she rode along with a falcon perched on her gold-embroidered glove, and encouraged the dogs with her voice, and the curvetings of her horse, the crowd enjoyed the splendid spectacle, and only grave men like Nicetas thought that she was wasting the revenues which were required to defend the empire.”<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to believe the authoritative accounts that have come down to us of the Constantinople of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. Its splendours seem to belong to the capital of a magician, and to the home of fairies and the poetic creatures of a dreamland, rather than to the men and women who actually built, inhabited, and destroyed this wonder of the world. The amount of its revenues is as astonishing and inconceivable as the wonders wrought by Aladdin's lamp, and all revenues from far and near passed directly into the imperial treasury. Its customs duties alone amounted to 20,000 pieces of gold daily; and in spite of the maintenance of armies and the cost of wars, the building of this splendid city, the constant provision of games and amusements for the people, the luxury of a court that cannot be exaggerated, and a church that exceeded all else in magnificence and cost, the sovereigns accumulated personal fortunes of tons of pure gold. The Empress Theodora laid by for her son 109,000 pounds' weight of gold and 300,000 pounds of silver. Basil II. had the tidy little sum of 200,000 pounds of gold, and other rulers and high

<sup>1</sup> Finlay.



*General View in Stamboul.*







officials followed these eminent examples with so good a will that their accumulations were beyond computation.

During eleven centuries the imperial palace became more and more magnificent under a succession of sovereigns, each one of whom strove to add something to its splendours.

“A mass of buildings between S. Sophia and the Marmora, and occupying a site which, from its choice by Constantine down to the present day, has been renowned at once for wonderful beauty and for the many and great events with which its history is crowded.”<sup>1</sup>

Its gardens descended by many terraces to the shore of the sea; its three domes were stately and commanding; its roof of gilded brass glittering beneath the clear blue skies, under such sunshine as is only experienced in the Orient, impressed men of the colder, grayer Western World, as if the supreme power had ordained an especial illumination for this favoured capital. This resplendent roof was supported by pillars of Italian marble, the walls between being incrustated with the same material in beautiful colours, and mingled with the exquisite Oriental alabaster. The extent of this palace may be imagined when it is remembered that it contained five churches, while its endless courts, corridors, and apartments, finished in mosaics composed of precious stones and marbles from all quarters of the globe, were spacious enough to contain the multitude of splendid paintings, statues, vases, and magnificent trophies, of an inconceivable variety, which had been gathered from all the known countries of the globe.

Imagination fails to conceive what this must have been when crowded by the aristocrats and court officials in their gorgeous costumes. Cloth of gold abounded, as well as embroidery and stuffs of the richest silk; and the best

<sup>1</sup> Pears, *Fall of Constantinople*.

authorities state that no other court of the world, at any period, has equalled that of Constantinople in splendour. The dress of all who frequented the palace was carefully regulated according to rank and official position; but the members of each class vied with one another in the magnificence of the material and the value of the jewels they were permitted to wear. Even the weapons they carried were covered with gold and silver. Their helmets were of precious metals, and their horses were adorned as richly as themselves. Every possible device was used to display the wealth of the emperor in his personal surroundings. There were canopies of the richest purple, thrones of solid gold, and a variety of furniture made of precious metals and covered with priceless tapestries. Artificial plants and trees with golden leaves, and automatic birds incrustated with rich jewels made a part of the costly bric-à-brac of this imperial palace in the city of the Golden Horn; and there were also two lions of natural size, of massy gold, which roared like beasts of the forests, while the birds warbled their mechanical notes.

The ceremonials of the court were rigid and burdensome. The monarch wore a high cap of some rich material, covered with jewels. This cap was surrounded by a horizontal circle of gold, from which rose two arches surmounted by a cross or globe of gold, while costly pearl lappets hung on each side. His purple buskins were a special symbol of his rank; and other portions of his dress, varied for different ceremonies, were carefully made more costly than any subject was permitted to wear.

So tedious was the etiquette of dress and customs in the Byzantine court that apparently neither pleasure nor comfort could have resulted from it to any one connected with it. A long procession of officials were interposed between the emperor and the people, which made access to his

person almost impossible, even for those who had important and sometimes vital information for his ear alone. This seclusion in the midst of a circle of high officials gave the appearance of godlike importance to the sovereign, and all possible methods were used to deepen this impression. Even the chief men of the government and court approached him with abject humility, fell prostrate before him, and kissed his feet.

Outside the palace, opposite S. Sophia, there was a square decorated with a fountain, its basin being lined with silver. At stated seasons this basin was filled with exquisite fruits, which the populace were permitted to take. This afforded a tumultuous spectacle; and the emperor viewed it from a resplendent throne, which was elevated to a lofty height, reached by a marble staircase.

“Below the throne were seated the officers of his guards, the magistrates, the chiefs of the factions of the circus; the inferior steps were occupied by the people, and the place below was covered with troops of dancers, singers, and pantomimists. The square was surrounded by the hall of justice, the arsenal, and the various offices of business and pleasure; and the *purple* chamber was named from the annual distribution of robes of scarlet and purple by the hand of the empress herself.”<sup>1</sup>

Whenever the emperor left the palace, it was made the occasion of an impressive demonstration. The streets through which he rode were cleared and cleaned. Flowers were strewn along his route, and the houses bordering it were hung with rich draperies. Chants in his praise were sung antiphonally by singers on opposite sides of the street; and if he went to a church, he was received by the Patriarch and clergy with imposing ceremonies and a magnificent display of sacerdotal costumes and symbols.

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

As early as the tenth century the city was broken up and made light and cheerful by open squares and places, which afforded a charming contrast to the narrow, gloomy lanes and streets of European cities. Its churches were imposing in their exterior architecture, and oppressively grand in their services. The houses of the wealthy were in keeping with the imperial palace; while the extent of the quays, warehouses, and factories, together with the enormous number of merchant vessels lying in the midst of the city, on the Golden Horn, afforded the most astonishing mercantile panorama in the world.

This immense commercial element brought men of affairs to Constantinople from all nations, and, as we have said, the factories of the Italians necessitated the setting apart of whole quarters of the town for their use, which gave the appearance of there being other cities enclosed within the grand whole of the capital. The faithful, stolid Varangians, the British guard of the imperial person and his palace, and the strange, half-barbarous soldiers recruited from the surrounding countries, together with Greek sailors, Russians, Copts, Persians, Armenians, Moslems, and Latins, who were visiting Constantinople, continually afforded a scenic effect such as would shame the most elaborate spectacles of our day.

In various parts of the city were thousands of human beings who virtually had no homes. Their lives began and ended in the streets; and the imperial dole which fed them and lengthened their wretched days, might well be considered an absolute curse. They made a show of reverence, kneeling before shrines and kissing images; but they also bawled and cheered at the circus, and furnished spectators wherever criminals were hanged, beheaded, blinded, or mutilated by having noses, tongues, ears, hands, and feet cut off.



In its early days there existed, in this capital, a middle class, which quite disappeared. The most potent factor in producing this result was the utter abandonment of a government service, all places of any worth being bestowed on the tools and favourites of the emperor and the officials. Another influence to this end was the increasing contempt for the profession of arms, on account of the attitude of the Patriarch and clergy towards it, soldiers being excluded from the sacrament for three years.

Again, trade and commerce were so abandoned to foreigners as to discourage the native merchants, who gradually sank into poverty; and although Constantinople, even in its decay, was superior to any Western centre in its artistic and mechanical productions, and while there were always superior engineers and skilful artificers to be found there, their numbers so decreased as to limit their production to the wants of the aristocratic and wealthy classes which had grown up while their humbler neighbours had almost disappeared. Through court favour, these had acquired enormous wealth and power, and were as venial in character as time-servers and sycophants must be in all ages and nations.

Naturally, in the midst of such conditions, the Church had not retained its purity and power. Costly churches and luxuriant monasteries were almost numberless. Fasts, feasts, ceremonies, and the idolatry of saints and relics were so continually *en evidence* as to simulate a devoted piety, and the simple-hearted among this people believed that a conscientious observance of these forms would assure them a place in heaven.

The splendid ritual of the Church was accompanied by the most magnificent music, which exercised a marvellous and enduring influence over the sensitive Greek nature; but of the power and meaning of anything worthy the name of Christianity, there was not a shadow remaining

in Constantinople at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The spirit, the aspiration, the glory of this capital had departed; and it remained, with all its natural and artistic beauty and grandeur, a hollow, heartless, ruined city, ready to become the prey of men stronger and more earnest than its debased and incompetent emperors and generals.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE LATIN CONQUEST, LAST EMPERORS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, AND ITS SUBJECTION BY THE OTTOMAN TURKS.

1204-1453.

THE story of the Fourth Crusade, from its preaching by Fulk of Neuilly to its end, is as full of romantic incident and interest as the most exciting story of adventure that has been written. But its adoption by Thibaut III., Count of Champagne, Simon de Montfort, Baldwin, Count of Flanders, the Counts of Blois and Saint Pol, Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat, Geoffrey of Villehardouin, — who wrote its history from day to day, — their bargain with Dandolo, the wonderful old Doge of Venice, for their conveyance in the ships of the republic, their embarking, the taking of Zara, and many other circumstances, do not concern the history of Constantinople.

The association of this Crusade and this capital began when all its leaders and warriors, being still in Zara, were joined by Alexius IV., son of the Comnenan Emperor, Isaac Angelus. Alexius had escaped from Constantinople when his father was deposed and blinded, and had sought help from the sovereigns of Europe, by which he might regain his empire.

When Alexius related all the story of his father's sufferings, and pictured the condition of the Byzantine empire; when he implored the Crusaders — before going to Palestine — to restore Constantinople to its legitimate rulers; above all, when he promised to pay them three and a half millions sterling, and to send an army with them to the

Holy Land at his own expense, — these soldiers of the Cross and above all the Venetians, favoured an assent to his request.

To reinstate the Comnenans, to restore the Church, to win endless glory, and be richly paid for this, and then to recover the Holy City, was a dazzling programme to the leaders of the Crusade. To the soldiers it was less attractive. They were hoping to secure everlasting bliss by their service to God, in rescuing His holy places from infidels; and when, having already been much delayed, this new plan was adopted, they deserted in large numbers, and found their way back to their homes or directly to the Holy Land. The Doge favoured the scheme. He knew, better than his companions, the enormous commercial advantages which would be gained by the conqueror of Constantinople, — the command of the entire trade of the Orient.

Thus, when in the spring of 1203, four hundred and forty vessels, carrying 40,000 soldiers, sailed up the Sea of Marmora to the very walls of Constantinople, there was a great variety of aims and opinions in the minds of the Crusaders.

The Greeks, remembering that they had previously repulsed their enemies, and believing their fortifications to be impregnable, flocked to the walls to gaze upon this unusual fleet with curiosity and confidence, trusting to their walls and towers, their Varangians and numberless soldiers, to repulse the attacks of the strangers, although their navy was ruined and reduced to twenty galleys, little better than useless, which lay in the Golden Horn.

The Crusaders landed near Scutari, and the emperor sent at once to demand their purpose in coming hither. When he was told that they had come to restore the rightful ruler to his throne, and invited him to resign his crown at once, he and his court were thrown into dire

confusion. The Crusaders hastened to transport cavalry across the Bosphorus, and easily routed the Greeks who were sent to attack them.

The occupation of the Golden Horn was most desirable to the Crusaders. It was closed by an enormous chain attached to towers on either side; but the Venetians, by means of their heaviest transport, armed with gigantic shears, broke through this barrier, and the port was soon filled with their vessels. It was then agreed that Dandolo, with his fleet, should assail the capital from the water, while the Flemings and French, under their noble commanders, essayed an attack by land. This last was made and fought with desperate courage, but was repulsed, while the Venetians were most successful. After wonderfully brave and skilful devices and most resolute fighting, bridges were lowered, Venetians crowded to the walls, and soon twenty-five towers, with the intervening battlements, were held by the Crusaders. The streets were more easily defended; but fires were kindled, and the Greeks hastily fled before them.

When Dandolo learned of the repulse of the land forces, he ordered his ships to proceed to their support; but the cowardly emperor had recalled his soldiers, and thrown away his opportunity of defeating his enemies. That very night this wretched creature deserted his people, and, securing as much money and jewels as his haste permitted, fled with a few friends.

When at daybreak the flight of the emperor was discovered, a certain Constantine, a eunuch, persuaded the Varangians to bring the blind old Isaac II. from his prison, and replace him on his throne. They also proclaimed his son Alexius as his colleague.

The Crusaders were much disturbed at finding the object for which they were fighting so peacefully accomplished without affording any reason for the sack of this



vast treasure-house. The Venetians sent at once to acquaint the old emperor with the promises which Alexius had made, and declared their purpose of retaining him in their care until his father consented to redeem these promises. Isaac at once assented to this, and a triumphal entry into the city followed, Alexius riding between Dandolo and Count Baldwin. There was no enthusiasm among the populace. One emperor had been as bad as another for so long a time that the people were indifferent to all alike; and when they learned of the enormous sum which Alexius had promised his Western friends, there was little hopefulness in the outlook. To satisfy this claim, the palace was stripped of its treasures. Even the vessels from the altars and the silver frames of the sacred pictures, as well as the precious objects which had been given to the monasteries, were sacrificed; and yet all these were insufficient.

Meanwhile the old emperor was closeted with astrologers and monks, who gave him the hope that he would recover his sight and live to be very old. The young Alexius was feasting and gambling with the knightly Crusaders; while the enormous army that he had brought with him had to be fed, and had made their camps in the most fertile suburbs, demanding provision for themselves and their horses.

The only encouragement for the Greeks was in the thought that the strangers had decided to depart at the end of September; but in August a great misfortune befell them. Some Flemish soldiers were supping at the house of a Flemish merchant, and, being drunk, they proceeded to loot a church and some warehouses near at hand. The people rose against them, and in the struggle a fire was set, and a terrible conflagration ensued, which lasted two nights and a day. A district a mile and a half long, from the Golden Horn to Marmora, was reduced to a

charred and smouldering waste. The fire lapped up palaces and warehouses alike; and many precious works of ancient art and classic manuscripts were burned, as well as the immense wealth of the merchants which was stored here. So great was the wrath of the people that fifteen thousand Latins who had long dwelt at Constantinople in safety, were forced to flee to the Crusaders for protection.

The destruction of so much wealth made it impossible to fulfil the promises of Alexius, and he was forced to confess that he could not pay the money. Dandolo heard this without anger, and replied that he would give more time; he would remain six months longer. As this would necessitate feeding his soldiers and sailors, it afforded a cheerless prospect to the Greeks. What should they do? They must submit or fight, and they could not be expected to do the latter. In January the Venetians precipitated matters by announcing that unless they were paid at once they should attack the city. At this the people revolted; and on January 25, 1204, at evening, they assembled the nobles and clergy, and commanded them to elect a new emperor. Days of confusion followed, as no one could be found who would accept the office. Just then Isaac II. died, and a young man was proclaimed against his will.

Alexius was in despair, and arranged to admit the Crusaders into the city; but while he awaited them, the chamberlain Marzoufle — thus named from his beetling eyebrows — rushed in to warn Alexius to flee from an approaching mob, and pretended to conduct him to safety. Leading him to a dungeon, he left him; and he was soon after strangled, while Marzoufle became emperor, and called himself Alexius V. He was of the aristocratic family of Ducas, which had already furnished two emperors. He was the bravest soldier of Constantinople, and made untiring efforts to repair its fortifications.

He patrolled the streets by night and day with a mace-of-arms in his hand, endeavouring to restore order, and to discipline the troops by attending their exercises. He was the only man who could influence the people for good; but when he insisted that all must fight, and undertook to recruit and train an army, he was hated; and when he led these compulsory soldiers to face the Crusaders, they turned and fled as one man.

Three months after Marzoufle had usurped the throne, the Crusaders determined to attack the city from the Golden Horn. The first attempt was unsuccessful; but when renewed on April 12, they accomplished much, and fought one of the most memorable battles of history. However, when evening fell, they feared that months would be required to complete the conquest of so strong a city. Another fire destroyed the eastern part of the capital, and Villehardouin wrote that the three fires caused by the Crusaders destroyed more buildings than existed in the three largest cities of France.

Marzoufle fled that night, and the people flocked to S. Sophia to elect another emperor. Their choice fell on Theodore Lascaris, the son-in-law of Alexius III. He endeavoured to persuade the Varangians to fight and to organize an army; but failing in this, he too fled, and before dawn three emperors of Constantinople were refugees.

In the morning a procession of the populace, bearing crosses and images, supplicated the forbearance of their conquerors. The Count of Flanders established himself in the palace of Blachernæ, the Marquis of Montferrat occupied the Bucoleon, and the Byzantine Empire was now under the rule of the Latins.

“Guards were then placed over the imperial treasury and the arsenal, but the troops and sailors were allowed to plunder the city without restraint. The insolence of victory was never

more haughtily displayed ; every crime was perpetrated without shame. The houses of the peaceful citizens were plundered, their wives dishonoured, and their children enslaved. Churches and monasteries were rifled ; monuments of religious zeal were defaced ; horses and mules were stabled in temples whose architectural magnificence was unequalled in the rest of Europe. The ceremonies of the Greeks were ridiculed ; the priests were insulted ; the sacred plate, the precious shrines in which the relics of martyrs and saints were preserved, the rich altar-cloths, and the jewelled ornaments were carried off. The soldiers and their female companions made the church of S. Sophia the scene of licentious orgies ; and Nicetas relates that ‘one of the priestesses of Satan,’ who accompanied the Crusaders, seated herself on the Patriarch’s throne, sang ribald songs before the high altar, and danced in the sacred edifice to the delight of the infuriated soldiery. . . . The age was one of fierce wars and dreadful calamities ; but the sack of Constantinople so far exceeded everything else that happened, both in its glory and its shame, as to become the favourite theme of popular song and dramatic representation throughout the known world. Villehardouin says that every Crusader occupied the house that pleased his fancy ; and men who the day before were in absolute poverty, suddenly found themselves possessed of wealth and living in luxury.”<sup>1</sup>

We have noted how from the foundation of the city it was adorned with beautiful works of ancient art, brought from Greece ; and the number of these had been constantly increased, while other splendid and costly objects had been acquired by the Byzantines or made especially to decorate their capital. Lists of magnificent statues that were now ruthlessly destroyed or carried away are given by historians, but are too long to be repeated here. The four bronze horses that adorn the Basilica of S. Marco in Venice are mementos of this sack of Constantinople, they having been brought from Chios to adorn the Hippo-

<sup>1</sup> Finlay.



drome. But few of the magnificent bronzes, however, escaped, for they were broken up and cast into the melting-pot by the tons' weight, with as little regard for their exquisite beauty and art as if these Venetians, Flemings, and Frenchmen had been the most barbarous barbarians who had ever existed.

As we have said, the tombs of the emperors in the church of the Holy Apostles from the time of Justinian were broken open and plundered of all valuables. The splendid robes of the priests were put on the horses of the crusading Christians; the icons were torn down; relics were stripped from their beautiful caskets and scattered on the ground, or carried away whole to be sold in other lands; chalices were robbed of their jewels and used as drinking-cups; and these pious thieves continued to plunder and destroy until even their spirit of vandalism was glutted.

The Latin leaders at length took thought for establishing order in this capital which they had overcome. They executed a few of their own people as examples, hoping thus to arrest the frightful license which prevailed. A solemn, public thanksgiving was ordered in S. Sophia, where God was praised that by his aid twenty thousand men had overpowered this mighty city; and "God wills it" was fervently shouted again and again.

A proclamation was issued promising protection to the inhabitants, and many left the capital. Another order commanded that all the booty should be deposited in three of the principal churches, where it was divided according to an agreement between the chiefs of the Crusade. The booty consisted of —

"sacred plate, golden crowns, images of saints, shrines of relics, candelabra of precious metals, statues of ancient gods, precious ornaments of Hellenic art and of Byzantine jewellery, which were heaped up with coined money from the imperial



treasury, and with silk, velvet, embroidered tissues, and jewels collected from the warehouses of merchants, from the shops of goldsmiths, and by domestic spoliation."<sup>1</sup>

Naturally a vast amount had been stolen by the soldiers or concealed by the inhabitants, while an equal portion of the splendid riches of the capital had perished by fire; but even so, that which was gathered in these three depositories was valued at 300,000 marks, each one of which was equal to a pound weight of silver, or about eighty-seven dollars of our money, the whole sum being worth a little more than twenty-three million dollars. Besides all this there were ten thousand horses and mules. The Count of Flanders, in a letter to the Pope, declared that the wealth of Constantinople was equal to that of all the cities of Western Europe combined.

The time had now arrived for placing a Latin emperor on the Byzantine throne, and after much consideration the choice fell on Baldwin, whose Flemish soldiers far outnumbered those of the French. The Venetians did not desire this honour. With their usual clearness they reflected that he who ruled must protect his empire; and Dandolo could be placed in no position superior to that which he held as Doge of the Republic of Venice.

"The personal character of Baldwin, his military accomplishments, his youth, power, and virtue, all pointed him out as the leader most likely to enjoy a long and prosperous reign. His piety and the purity of his private life commanded the respect of the Greeks, who vainly hoped to enjoy peace under his government. He was one of the few Crusaders who paid strict attention to his vows of abstinence; and a singular proclamation, which he thought it necessary to repeat twice a week, forbidding all who were guilty of incontinency to sleep within the walls of his palace, shows that he knew that the majority of his countrymen easily forgot their vows."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Finlay.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Of the exiled emperors, Theodore Lascaris was established as ruler of Nicæa. Alexius III. and Marzoufle united their forces in the hope of preventing the Latins from adding to the territory they had already conquered, which was nearly the same as the present Roumelia. Misfortune had not made these men better. Alexius seized and blinded Marzoufle, and gave him over to the Latins, who sentenced him to be hurled from the top of the Theodosian column one hundred and forty-seven feet high, — the base is still to be seen about a mile west of the Hippodrome, — and dashed to pieces, to the satisfaction of thousands of spectators, who saw in this punishment the fulfilment of an old prophecy that a perfidious emperor should thus die.

Baldwin began his reign by conciliating the Pope and the King of France. He sent promises of aid to Palestine, together with the gates of Constantinople and the chain which once barred his way into the Golden Horn, as proofs of his power; but he treated his neighbours haughtily, and when the King of the Bulgarians, who was of the Latin Church, sent ambassadors to congratulate the new emperor upon his conquest of the Greeks, Baldwin committed the folly of assaulting the ambassadors, and replied that King John must himself touch the imperial footstool with his forehead before he could be treated as a friend.

When the Greeks saw that many of the Latin troops were sent to protect other portions of the empire, they began to plot revolts, in which they were joined by the Bulgarians, and they in turn by the savage Comans, who brought 14,000 men into the contest, who were more mad and hungry for murder and pillage than the Greeks and Bulgarians themselves.

Baldwin, in his fearless confidence in himself and his followers, and believing his enemies to be cowards,

despised the cautious counsels of Dandolo, and through his folly permitted himself and many of his troops to be entrapped in a place from which there was no escape, as his enemies completely surrounded him. Dandolo and a remnant of the Latins heroically gained the capital, but the fate of Baldwin was never known. The wildest stories were circulated concerning his sufferings; but the only known fact is that a year later the King of the Bulgarians wrote to the Pope that Baldwin was no longer alive.

In August, 1206, more than a year after the defeat of Baldwin, his brother Henry consented to become the Emperor of Constantinople. His reign of ten years was characterized by a moderation which ruled wisely over Church and State. His chief military success was an attack on the Bulgarian force of 40,000, when his own numbered less than a quarter as many. Henry undertook this action to succour the Greeks, who had chosen the Bulgarian rule, and, being abused beyond endurance, sought the help of the Latins they had deserted.

This emperor devoted his whole thought to the reformation of the government, and instituted many admirable measures, which made the imperial power equal to that of the Church. Having no children, he left his authority and place to his sister, Yolande, wife of Peter de Courtenay.

This noble was crowned Emperor of the East by Pope Honorius III., and in order to present himself to his subjects in state suitable to a sovereign, he sold and mortgaged his estates, and succeeded in inducing one hundred and forty knights and more than five thousand soldiers to attend him to his capital on the Bosphorus. He then applied to the Venetians for conveyance to Constantinople, and they, as a part of the price for this service, demanded that he should reduce Durazzo for them. Not succeeding in this, the transport was refused by the Vene-

tians. He then agreed with Theodore, the ruler of Durazzo, that his forces should be conducted overland to Constantinople. As might easily have been foreseen, the Greeks did not neglect so excellent an opportunity for treachery. In the mountains Peter de Courtenay was attacked by the soldiers of Theodore, who killed the Europeans or led them captive, while their leader was a prisoner two years before he was put to death.

A period of confusion that we will not try to make clear now ensued in Constantinople; and nothing of interest to us occurred until, in 1228, John of Brienne, already titular King of Jerusalem, consented to share the throne of Constantinople with the young Baldwin II., son of Peter de Courtenay.

The Eastern Empire, reduced to a tithe of its former extent, no longer held any revenue-producing territory, and from its few remaining dukedoms and small fiefs there was little or nothing received in tribute. The army and navy had diminished proportionately with the territory; and he who would attempt the restoration of any important part of the former wealth and grandeur of Constantinople had a herculean task in prospect.

John of Brienne, during the first two years of his reign, was singularly inactive, for a soldier of his acknowledged bravery and prowess. But when he learned that the Emperor Vataces, the successor of Theodore Lascaris, was making an alliance with Agau, King of the Bulgarians, he knew that this union could have but one end in view, — the destruction of his power; and although he probably knew that the extinction of the Latin power in the East could not be long delayed, John of Brienne was not a man to be defeated without a contest; and in this struggle he proved to be like Samson when he slew his thousand with the jawbone of an ass, — for, having but a hundred and sixty knights, and about two thousand



soldiers, he sallied boldly forth, routed and put to flight the army of the allies, numbering 100,000 men; and of their three hundred ships he captured twenty-five, and brought them safely to port.

That bold historian, Gibbon, who was familiar with large figures and tales of astounding heroism, declares that he trembled as he wrote the above story. Various writers have compared the old soldier to Ajax, Hector, Judas Maccabæus, and other heroes, real and mythological; but if this be an "over true tale," it would seem that a favourable comparison with John de Brienne would be a compliment to one and all of them. The following year he again defeated his united enemies, and his subjects began to regret deeply his advanced age, as well they might, could they have foreseen the weakness of the coming emperor.

Baldwin II. might well be called the Imperial Beggar. He travelled over Europe asking for money, and received a small sum from England alone. Louis IX. was devoting his life and money to delivering Jerusalem. Frederick II., Baldwin's brother-in-law, could scarcely be expected to aid a sovereign who was loyal to the church which had excommunicated him; and the Pope could give the emperor no coin save that of indulgences, of which few people of that day felt the need. At length, by the sale of his French estates, Baldwin gathered an army of 30,000 men, with which he reconquered about sixty miles of the country immediately surrounding his capital. But to what purpose can a monarch conquer territory which he can neither occupy nor defend?

Very soon he could not pay his soldiers, and so great was the poverty of his palace that its fires were fed from the sale of lead stripped from the churches. His son was in Venice, a hostage for his debts; and finally, under such stress of want as this, Baldwin resolved to sell the holy relics which had been spared in the sack of 1204.



The most important of these, the Crown of Thorns, was already mortgaged to the Venetians for a large sum, which Baldwin was unable to pay; and as the Venetians could rightfully claim this crown, he cleverly decided to present it to the King of France. Precious relics could be pawned or given away, but not sold, as it was not allowable to fix a price for them. Frederick II. complaisantly permitted the Crown of Thorns to pass through his kingdom, and Louis IX. *made a present* to Baldwin of about 900,000 dollars! besides which Baldwin had the satisfaction of having outwitted the Venetians.

A large and authentic piece of the True Cross was a second gift from the emperor to the French King, who placed it in La Sainte Chapelle, where it proved its genuineness by working miracles until the time of the League, when it disappeared, and has not since been heard of. Baldwin now promptly received a second present from Louis of about 180,000 dollars. So encouraging had these transactions proved that the Swaddling Clothes of the Divine Child, the Lance which pierced His Side when on the Cross, the Chain which bound His Hands, the Sponge from which He drank, the Rod of Moses, and a portion of the Skull of John the Baptist were all, one after the other, freely given to the pious Louis. What suitable return could be made for such treasures except in pure gold? And this was given Baldwin in generous sums.

And unless these relics, so sacred in the eyes of millions, were to fall into the hands of the Turks, it was time that they were in the keeping of a Christian power strong enough to guard them. It has been said that the only result of the Latin Conquest of Constantinople was the transference of relics from the East to the West. To those who believe in the efficacy of relics, — and in the Middle Ages all Christians did, — it must be a matter of profound thankfulness that these sacred objects were not left to fall into the hands of Mohammedans.

But was this the only result ? If so, the wily policy of Dandolo was far less important than my history teaches me. To this conquest I should attribute not only the frightful material losses from the terrific conflagrations, the destruction of vast stores of wealth, and the theft of splendid objects passing computation, but also the destruction of commerce and its deflection to the Italian Republics. It caused the disappearance, even the extinction, of the ancient nobility ; it added to the abasement of the already pitiable lower classes ; it sounded the death-knell of scholarship and learning, and imposed upon the empire a ritual and religion so strange and unwelcome to the Greeks that it extinguished the little religious sentiment or superstition that remained to comfort this demoralized nation which the fiery old Doge had placed under Frankish rule. He had taken away all that they had of material, moral, intellectual, and spiritual worth, and gave them nothing with which to solace themselves or to replace what they had lost.

The money which Baldwin received from France was soon exhausted, and he was as unable to pay his soldiers as before. The throne rested solely on the fame of the past grandeur of the empire. Had the weakness of the Latins been suspected, the end would have come much earlier than it did.

When Michael Paleologus came to the throne of Nicæa, in 1259, he determined to overthrow the Latins. He fortified Thrace, and expelled all Latins from that portion of his realm. Having in mind its former reputation, and being ignorant of its hopeless condition, he proceeded against the capital as cautiously as he could have done against John of Brienne himself.

The Latins having received aid from Venice resolved to attack the Greeks, and sent out soldiers and galleys to take the port of Daphnusia, leaving the capital almost

defenceless. This afforded an opportunity to certain traitors within the walls; and before the Latins were awake on a fine summer morning, the Greeks were in possession of the fortifications and ready to storm the imperial palace. Baldwin made no attempt to fight or capitulate. Leaving behind his sceptre, crown, and sword, he fled to the port and embarked for Eubœa. He lived twelve years more in absolute obscurity. His son Philip, however, assumed the title of Emperor of Constantinople, which empty and questionable honour was claimed by his descendants through two and a half centuries. The good King René of Anjou was one of the last to add this to his other titles.

When the Greeks found that they had taken an empty palace, they bore the royal insignia in mock solemnity through the streets. As the citizens opened their houses, and learned that in their sleep they had been peacefully restored to a Greek sovereign, their joy and enthusiasm made the city ring with shouts of "Long live Michael, long live the Emperor of the Romans!"

The Venetians were permitted to remove their families and their goods to their own vessels, and then the houses of their quarter were burned. When the troops returned from Daphnusia, a truce was made; and soon after the entire Latin fleet sailed away and bore to the world the news that the Latin empire had ceased to exist, in which fact little interest was manifested.

The Italian powers, with their instinct for trade, made an alliance with the Greeks, and were assigned the quarter of Pera in consideration of their promise of naval aid, should the capital be assailed. These merchants were soon the only vital power in the midst of the ever-increasing weakness of the empire.

The fate which was surely advancing upon Constantinople — its conquest by the Ottoman Turks — was still

deferred through nearly two centuries. Every possible means was used to induce the Christian sovereigns of Europe, and especially the Pope, to protect their vantage-ground in the East, and preserve it from falling into the hands of the Mohammedans. But the Western rulers were occupied with affairs nearer home, and the time had passed when pope or priest could organize a crusade for the protection of the Church.

One ruler of Constantinople after another retired to a monastery, while a more sanguine man filled his place, but to follow his example in the end. Now and then a sedition arose, and the capital, threatened by Turks without, was torn by factions within. The Turks gradually encroached upon the neighbouring islands and shores, and skilfully surrounded the coveted possession with such a net as must insure their final success. In their advance the Moslems neither admired nor protected the relics of civilization. The splendid city of Ephesus was razed to the ground, and the once powerful and splendid Byzantine Empire was completely desolated.

The reign of Michael Paleologus ended in 1282; and after a dreary succession of incompetent rulers, John Cantacuzene came to the throne in 1347. He shamelessly made an alliance with the Moslems, and gave his daughter in marriage with Orchan, the son of the great Othman, the founder of the dynasty which bears his name, and has furnished thirty-four rulers, in direct descent, to the Ottoman Empire in six hundred years, — a unique experience, — no other family having thus flourished in any other nation.

One condition of the alliance between Orchan and his father-in-law permitted the Turk to sell his prisoners of war as slaves in Constantinople. A crowd of naked Christians of both sexes and all ages — virgins and matrons, monks and priests, the humble and the noble —



were thus exposed for public sale in the market of the capital, where the whip was freely used to excite the pity of those who still had sufficient means to redeem such sufferers; but these were few in number, and most of the unfortunates were led away to a terrible bondage.

Amurath I., the son and successor of Orchan, and the founder of the order of the Janissaries, had such control over John Paleologus, the so-called emperor, and of his sons, that one can but wonder why the absolute reign of the Turk in Constantinople, in his own name, was so long deferred. Manuel, a son of the above-named John, was a hostage in the hands of the Moslems at the time of his father's death, and seems to have been possessed of a spirit and temper such as had not been shown by his race for generations.

He escaped, and seated himself on what was by courtesy called the throne of Constantinople; and although he was commanded to resign his power to Bayezid, the Ottoman ruler, Manuel succeeded in arousing the zeal of the West in his behalf, and France, Germany, Hungary, and Burgundy sent soldiers who fought bravely for him. At the battle of Nicopolis, however, Bayezid repulsed these combined forces, and made the Count of Nevers and a goodly number of French nobles prisoners. Had Bayezid not been in danger from the great Tamerlane, he would undoubtedly have completed the overthrow of the Greek power immediately after this engagement, when he had defeated an army of 100,000 Christians, who had proudly boasted that should the sky fall they could uphold it with their lances.

While Manuel traversed Europe, and even visited England seeking friends and aid, Tamerlane rendered him great assistance by overthrowing Bayezid and holding him a prisoner in an iron cage, as the story is told. Constantinople was not again besieged by the Moslems until twenty



years had passed. Then Murad II. led against it an army said to number 200,000 men. The capital had been put in a better state for defence; and the clumsy cannon, now first used by the Turks, did no harm to the besieged. A celebrated dervish led an assault, which was most disastrous to the Janissaries, of whom a thousand were slain, while the Greeks suffered little loss.

Fortunately Murad was recalled to his own territory, and shortly after a truce was concluded between the emperor and the Sultan, which enabled Manuel, by the payment of tribute, to pass his remaining years with no fear of the Turks. This was continued during the next reign, until 1448.

In 1453 Mohammed II. began the world-renowned siege which gained for him the title of "the Conqueror," although Gibbon calls him "the great Destroyer." The conquest of the Byzantine capital was the realization of the dream of Othman, — that the Crescent should dash the crown of Constantine to the ground, and rule over its splendid capital and goodly territory.

Mohammed I. had already built the *Anadoln Hisār* — castle of Anatolia — on the Asiatic shore where the Bosphorus is narrowest, as a threat to the safety of Constantinople. Mohammed II. now erected the *Rumelia Hisār* — castle of Roumelia — on the European shore just opposite the first. It was constructed in three months. Two thousand masons and labourers were employed, and into its walls — thirty feet in thickness — were built altars and pillars of Christian churches. The ordnance placed on its chief tower was powerful enough to throw stone balls weighing more than a quarter of a ton; and when all was completed, a garrison of four hundred men were placed in this castle, and toll was demanded from every passing vessel.

This action was a breach of the truce between the

Powers; but to the emperor's remonstrances Mohammed replied: "Have you the power or right to question what I do in my own country? The Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus is mine, and my people dwell there. The European shore I can take with right, since the Europeans have deserted it." He revealed his whole purpose when he added, "My resolutions surpass the ambitions of my predecessors."

Naturally the people of Constantinople were terrified at the prospect before them. Had their fortifications been impregnable, there were not men enough to defend them. The half million of inhabitants of the time of the Latin conquest had dwindled to a meagre one hundred thousand, all told, and of these not more than eight thousand were efficient soldiers. The small outlying territory which still belonged to the Greeks was sparsely inhabited by poor men, who were no reliance in time of war; and neither within the city nor without did any public spirit exist.

The streets of the capital were now bordered with half-ruined edifices. The exquisite marbles and mosaics with which they were formerly incrustured, had been torn away, and sold to Venetians and Genoese. Some of them may still be seen in distant cities, sad relics of the splendour of Byzantine glory. Famine and pestilence had repeatedly done their deadly work on the people; and after all the misfortunes they had suffered through their own rulers, from the barbarous Northern nations and the Turks, as well as from the natural causes which they considered the curse of God, it would have been miraculous had they shown resolution in repulsing a foe to whom they must finally succumb, as they knew all too well.

The moral tone of the Greeks, too, was inferior to that of the Turks; and although they claimed to be the only Orthodox Christians, the Greeks had neither honour nor

courage. Their Christianity was made up of processions and ceremonials, of pharisaical exclusiveness and hatred of the Latin Church, as was well expressed by the Grand Duke Notanas, when he said, "I should welcome the turban of the Sultan to Constantinople more gladly than the tiara of the Pope." The historian Ducas, speaking of their blind bigotry, declares that "they would not have listened to an angel from heaven if he bade them make their peace with Rome."

In spite of the general poverty, there were men of great wealth among the Greeks, who would perjure themselves as to their riches rather than pay mercenary troops for protection. Many citizens, too, of all classes fled from the city that they believed to be doomed to conquest; and the emperor could not have gathered more than seven thousand soldiers had not the Venetians come to his aid, while John Giustiniani, the Genoese, and John Grant, the German, brought a few ships and some well-disciplined soldiers to protect their own interests in Constantinople, as well as to aid in its defence; and thus the whole number of the force within the walls was about nine thousand. When we remember that the wall which must be manned extended more than five miles on the land side, and that the port and several miles on the sea required special defence, we at once perceive that the emperor was hopelessly weak, and that only a miracle could avail for his safety against an army of 258,000 men, well provided with the munitions of war, and supplied with powerful cannon.

Base and cowardly as the Greeks were, their emperor, Constantine Paleologus, merits the fame of a hero. We are amazed that the fate of the city was averted fifty-three days, during which many thousands of its besiegers were slain, and attack after attack successfully repulsed; and, in short, the heroism of the emperor and his advisers may

well have inspired Gibbon to say, "The distress and fall of this last Constantine are more glorious than the long prosperity of the Byzantine Cæsars."

No proper account of this memorable siege can be given in the space at our command; and to one who has read the magnificent description by Gibbon, it seems a literary crime to attempt an original treatment of it, above all, since, in the light of all research made to the present day, the narrative of the great English historian is found to be unusually correct.

The Turk, Sa'd-ud-din — translated by Mr. Gibb — employed prose in rhyme; and while his facts accord with those of Gibbon, his point of view gives them a different colouring, as in the following: —

"And so that spacious land, that city strong and grand, from being the seat of hostility, became the seat of the currency; and from being the nest of the owl of shame, became the threshold of glory and of fame. Through the fair efforts of the Moslem King, in the place of the ill-toned voice of the paynim's bell, were heard the Mohammedan screed, and the five-fold chant of the Ahmedi creed, noble of rite; and the harmony fair of the call to prayer on the ears of all men fell. . . . And the mandate, strong as fate, of the Sultan fortunate, was supreme in the ordnance of that new estate."

Thus did Constantinople become the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and was christened, in the tongue of its new rulers, Istamboul.

## Part Second.



### CONSTANTINOPLE UNDER THE OTTOMAN TURKS.

In the lands where European civilization first had its birth, the European has been ruled by the barbarian. There have been other phenomena in European history which have approached to this ; but there is none that supplies an exact parallel.

EDWARD A. FREEMAN, D.C.L., LL.D.







*View within St. Sophia.*







## CHAPTER VII.

MOHAMMED II., BAYEZID II., SELIM I., AND SULEIMAN THE  
MAGNIFICENT.

1453-1566.

ABOUT mid-day, on April 29, 1453, Mohammed II. entered Constantinople as its conqueror. His soldiers were already scattered throughout the city, and, not realizing the small number and weakness of the surviving inhabitants, they at first slew all whom they met; but soon perceiving that they need fear no resistance, they began to make prisoners of their conquered foes.

Meantime a large detachment of the troops proceeded to the church of S. Sophia, where men, women, and children had assembled in great numbers, — it is said to have held twenty thousand, — and these the Moslems apportioned among the soldiers as slaves, irrespective of age or rank, and hurried them off to the camp.

“In the space of an hour the male captives were bound with cords, the females with thin veils and girdles. The senators were linked with their slaves; the prelates with the porters of the church; and young men of a plebeian class with noble maids whose faces had been invisible to the sun and their nearest kindred. In this common captivity the ranks of society were confounded; the ties of nature were cut asunder; and the inexorable soldier was careless of the father’s groans, the tears of the mother, and the lamentations of the children. The loudest in their wailings were the nuns, who were torn from the altar with naked bosoms, outstretched hands, and dishevelled hair; and we should piously believe that few could be

tempted to prefer the vigils of the harem to those of the monastery. Of these unfortunate Greeks, of these domestic animals, whole strings were rudely driven through the streets; and as the conquerors were eager to return for more prey, their trembling pace was quickened with menaces and blows. . . . Above sixty thousand of this devoted people were transported from the city to the camp and fleet; exchanged or sold according to the caprice or interest of their masters, and dispersed in remote servitude through the provinces of the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>1</sup>

The Moslem conquerors now emulated the Latins in their deeds two centuries earlier. Seizing on all that was valuable, they divided it among the soldiers so quickly that all traces of the Christian religion soon disappeared from the churches of the capital. Other bands of Turks seized the warehouses, and stripped them of their riches; and thus the plunder of the city proceeded rapidly.

Mohammed II., surrounded by his viziers, pashas, and guards, rode directly from the Adrianople Gate towards S. Sophia. He beheld with wonder and admiration the city which he now ruled. In the Hippodrome the Column of the Serpents attracted his eye. The Turks believed these monsters to be the idols or talismans of the city; and the Sultan, with a single blow of his battle-axe, shattered the head of one of the three.

When he reached the sacred temple, he ordered the public edifices to be preserved, and struck with his scimitar a Moslem who was destroying a mosaic; and no desolating conflagrations, such as the Latins had caused, were permitted.

Mohammed immediately ascended the high altar, and offered both prayers and thanksgivings. He then announced that this splendid temple was now a mosque, where all Moslems could pray, and commanded that from that time the muezzin should summon believers in the name of

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

God and his Prophet, according to the customs of their religion.

The Sultan then commanded search to be made for the body of the Emperor Constantine. As he had fallen in the midst of great numbers of the slain, and had cautiously thrown off the purple, his corpse was recognized with difficulty; but was at length identified by the golden eagles embroidered on his buskins. The emperor's head was cut off, and left for a time between the feet of the bronze horse of the equestrian statue of Justinian in the Augusteum. It was then embalmed, and sent to the chief cities of Asia in turn, to testify to the overthrow of Constantine, and the prowess of Mohammed II.

When the Sultan proceeded to the palace, he witnessed desolation and decay, not only along the route by which he passed, but in the palace itself, the largest portion of which had evidently been long since abandoned. The mounds of the slain, which were seen in many portions of the capital, had apparently no effect on the mind of the young conqueror; but the crumbling city and the deserted palace impressed him deeply, and he quoted from a Persian poet a couplet of kindred nature with that prophecy of Homer's which Scipio repeated at the fall of Carthage: "The spider's web is the royal curtain in the palace of Cæsar; the owl is the sentinel on the watch-tower of Afrasiab."

A century and a half had passed since Othman — the Bone-breaker — had dreamed his prophetic dream, but now fulfilled, and Constantinople had become the central jewel in the ring of the Turkish Empire. Its conqueror was but twenty-three years old, one year older than Alexander when he fought at the Granicus, and three years younger than Napoleon at Lodi. The fame which Mohammed later gained as a victorious warrior entitles him to be ranked with these imperial conquerors.

In the first intoxication of conquest, power, and wine, Mohammed committed most brutal acts, and indulged his lust and wrath by methods that we may not rehearse. On the occasion of his first banquet in Constantinople, a row of bloody heads was on the table before him, and great numbers of Christians were executed while he was in his most savage mood.

But his instincts as a sovereign soon asserted themselves. He did not wish to rule over a deserted capital, and he realized that wisdom would suggest the retention of the Greeks among his subjects. Thus, ten days after his conquest, he proclaimed himself the protector of the Greek Church, over which he established a new Patriarch. He also guaranteed the safety of the Greeks, who returned to their homes and occupations, and soon after granted a charter, by which he gave many privileges to the Patriarch, his Church, and his people.

We have seen how much the population of Constantinople had decreased before the siege, and after it there was but a small number remaining. With each new conquest Mohammed II. sent many thousands of colonists to his capital; and at the close of his reign — about a quarter of a century after its conquest — it was densely populated, and the scene of such activity and prosperity as had not been known for centuries under Greek rule. In place of Greeks and Latins there were now Servians, Bulgarians, Albanians, Turkomans, and other Oriental peoples; and this motley multitude so changed the aspect of the city that it bore little resemblance either to the ancient Byzantine capital or to the New Rome.

Among the pronounced traits of the repulsive character of Mohammed II. was his secrecy regarding his plans and his swiftness in executing them. To an officer who once asked the main objects of his campaign, he replied: "If a hair of my beard knew them, I would pluck it out and



cast it into the fire." Thus no one knew his objective point, when, in May, 1481, he was mustering his forces, and suddenly expired in their midst.

One wonders how tyrants retain their power; and it is incomprehensible that a Sultan who murdered as many subjects as he chose, to gratify his bad temper, should not have been murdered many times a day himself! But the followers of the Prophet place small value on life, and believe that death by the Sultan's hand or command, if suffered without resistance, brings all the joys of the Mussulman's heaven, for which they long as for no earthly good. This carelessness of life gives an appearance of great courage to the Mohammedan soldiers, whose real sentiments are those of pure fatalism, of men who place no value on life.

The wonderful corps of Janissaries, which made so important a part of the Turkish army, was a peculiar institution, and exemplified not only the devotion of its followers to the religion of Mohammed, but also the usual zeal of proselytes, and their customary hatred of those who adhere to the faith which they have forsaken. They were sons of Christians educated as Mohammedans from their childhood. This order was established in the middle of the fourteenth century, and called "Yeñi askari," or "New soldiers," which name was changed by Europeans into that which we know. At first this corps was made up of the sons of Christian prisoners alone; but was later enlarged by tribute children, a tax of this sort being levied on the Christian subjects of the Sultan. This inhuman tax aroused little opposition on the part of the Greeks, who suffered so keenly from famine and other hardships, that to see their children well cared for, well educated and *paid* as soldiers, seemed a less hard fate than frequently befell the boys who were left at home. The tribute of children was not abolished until 1685.



The boys were taken at about eight years. Their education was precisely like that of the Ottoman princes. When older, they were divided into soldiers and men of the pen, the latter becoming civil officials of all ranks, even ministers of state. Their physical culture was carefully conducted, and they were all instructed in the Turkish language until they were sufficiently developed, and their characteristics were so pronounced that they could be properly assigned to military, civil, or even ecclesiastical professions.

“ In the slow and painful steps of education, their characters and talents were unfolded to a discerning eye. The *man*, naked and alone, was reduced to the standard of his personal merit. . . . The Ottoman candidates were trained by the virtues of abstinence to those of action, by the habits of submission to those of command. A similar spirit was diffused among the troops; and their silence and sobriety, their patience and modesty, have extorted the reluctant praise of their Christian enemies. Nor can the victory appear doubtful if we compare the discipline and exercise of the Janissaries with the pride of birth, the independence of chivalry, the ignorance of the new levies, the mutinous temper of the veterans, and the vices of intemperance and disorder which so long contaminated the armies of Europe.”<sup>1</sup>

Mohammed II. had twelve thousand Janissaries. He increased their pay and enlarged their privileges; and as the Turks added to their European conquests, they recruited this corps from the children of the conquered European Christians rather than from those of Asia.

To return to Mohammed II., he is infamously famous as the originator of the legislation which established the custom of imperial fratricide. These were the words of his institutes: “The majority of my jurists have pronounced that those of my illustrious descendants who

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

ascend the throne may put their brothers to death, in order to secure the repose of the world. It will be their duty to act accordingly."

When Mohammed II. gave his attention to the improvement of the desolated capital that he had conquered, he chose the same site for his palace that had best pleased Constantine the Great. He extended the grounds considerably beyond their original limits, and it was henceforth called Seraglio Point.

The Sultan destroyed the strongholds of Galata, lest they should be of advantage to his Latin subjects, and proceeded with great energy to repair his walls and fortifications. He surrounded S. Sophia with groves and fountains, and crowned it with minarets. This served as a model for all royal mosques, the first of which was erected by Mohammed II., and bears his name. For this he chose the site on which the church of the Twelve Apostles had been erected by S. Helena, and rebuilt by the Empress Theodora.

Five years were consumed in building this mosque; and the architect, the Greek Christodoulos, was remunerated with an entire adjoining street. Its original beauty can scarcely be imagined now, since it has suffered from earthquake, and been repaired in a style quite out of keeping with that in which it was built; but there are many beautiful marbles remaining. Its fore-court, with its portico and fountain, is attractive; and much historic interest centres here. The tombs of Mohammed II. and his family are in the grounds of the mosque. At the right of the great gate is a marble table on which—in golden characters on a field of *lapis lazuli*—are inscribed the Prophet's prophetic words: "They will capture Constantinople; and happy the prince, happy the army, which accomplishes this."

A legend connected with this mosque relates that

Mohammed was so enraged at some mistakes made by Christodoulos that he ordered the architect's hands to be cut off. The next day in the court, before the Judge of Constantinople, the architect sued the Sultan for damages. Mohammed was summoned, and appeared in order to respect the law. When he was about to sit down, the judge reminded him of the law by which the parties to a suit remained standing. The judge — after hearing the complaint of the architect, and the justification of his cruelty by the Sultan — decreed that Mohammed must maintain the architect and his family or have his own hand cut off. The Sultan settled a proper sum upon Christodoulos; and when all was done, the judge excused himself to Mohammed for the course he had taken. To this the Sultan replied that had the judge done otherwise, or given a verdict against the architect, he would have slain him with the battle-axe he carried. "And I," said the judge, "if my Sultan had refused to abide by my decision, should have profited by the aid of this servant of justice!" and, throwing back the rug, the judge exposed a poisonous snake, which extended its forked tongue, and was hurriedly re-covered. The Sultan kissed the hand of the judge, and returned to the Seraglio.

Mohammed II. surrounded his mosque with eight academies, a home for students, a bath, a hospital, a diet-house for the poor, and a caravansary.

The *turbèh* of Mohammed II., in which he lies alone, is near his mosque. Not far away is that of his mother, Aselyma, said to have been the daughter of Charles VII. of France. She was celebrated for her learning, and greatly beloved by her famous son. In the sumptuous tomb of Mohammed, a tooth of the Prophet is preserved, which is shown to the faithful once each year. It is said to have been struck from his mouth by a severe blow from a battle-axe in the famous battle of Bedr.

On the third day after his conquest the Sultan had a vision, which revealed to him the grave of Abu Ayoob, or Job, who had fallen in A. D. 668, during the first siege of Constantinople by the Moslems. The picturesque village called by the name of this saint is situated beyond the walls of Stamboul, at the end of the Golden Horn.

The mosque built here by the conqueror of the fifteenth century, almost nine hundred years after the death of Ayoob, is a most holy place; and here each new ruler of Istamboul comes, to be girded with the sword of Othman by a distinguished dervish.

No Christian is permitted to reside in the suburb of Ayoob, neither are they supposed to enter the mosque; but this rule is not strictly observed. In 1868 I saw its interior and its surroundings.

Many relatives of the Sultans are buried in this much-venerated place; and their *turbehs*, or tombs, are richly decorated with precious metals, mother-of-pearl, costly shawls, gold-embroidered velvets, and other rare Oriental stuffs.

Here, too, are the tombs of four children who were murdered according to the decree of Mohammed II., which barbarous law still exists. One of these tombs is thus inscribed:—

“A flower that had scarcely bloomed was prematurely torn from its stem. It has been removed to those bowers where roses never languish. Its parent’s tears will supply refreshing moisture. Say a *fatcha* for its beatitude.”

This child was the nephew of Sultan Abdul Aziz. It was murdered in 1843, and its mother survived this terrible tragedy but a few weeks.

Near the mosque is a temple, with an octagonal dome, in which the Muftis are buried. The huge black cata-



falques raised over them are decorated with muslin turbans of an enormous height.

Ayoob is very impressive, especially towards evening. Its light minarets are seen from Pera, and are an attractive feature in the view across the Golden Horn. If from Pera one goes by caique, and climbs the steep path between the tombs, the peacefulness and silence of the place, the deep shadows of its plane and cypress trees, its oaks and acacias, are such as should be found in a city of the dead; but here there seems to be an element of haughtiness and pride as well, which perfectly accords with the spirit of the Sultans and other dignitaries who here sleep their long sleep.

The chief importance of Ayoob, however, is not concerned with the end, but with the beginning, of a Sultan's reign. Here he comes to be consecrated on the same plateau where the Greek rulers were presented to the army and proclaimed emperors.

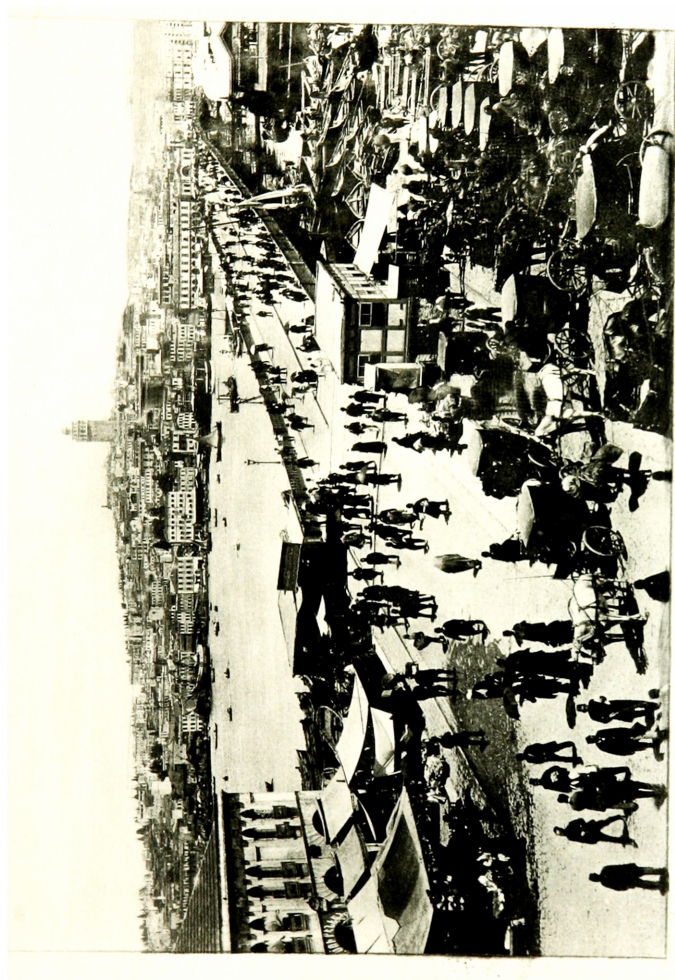
It is said that any foreigner found here on such an occasion would be murdered; but we have some knowledge of the ceremony as originally conducted, and the description of it in 1774 would be essentially applicable to all, as the Moslems endeavour to adhere to the ancient forms of these important functions.

The procession was led by the Grand Vizier and Chief Mufti on horseback. Next followed thirty-two richly caparisoned horses, twelve of which bore shields, which glittered with precious gems. Next rode the Sultan, surrounded by guards, and so blazing with diamonds that he might well be called the "Brother of the Sun." On his right side walked the master of the horse, and on the left the grand chamberlain, while two aids managed the reins and carried the standard of the Prophet. Following these superior officials came the officers of the stirrup, the cup-bearer, the chief huntsman, and numerous other minor officials.





*The **Bridge** from Stamboul.*





The ceremony of dismounting was most important. The above-mentioned officials retired, while the Agha of the Janissaries, the Grand Vizier, and the Chief Eunuch alone touched the person of the Sultan. Behind him two turbans were borne on embroidered cushions. These were symbols of his rule over two worlds; and in order that he should not be fatigued, these turbans were nodded from right to left, thus saluting the multitude. Other pages bore the stool on which the Sultan placed his foot in dismounting, and the spoon for his use in his ablutions in the mosque.

Lines of Janissaries were drawn up before the mosque; and as he rode between them, a Greek custom was followed of scattering coins among the crowds of spectators. The Sultan actually bowed to the Janissaries, and they returned his salute with their faces turned to the left, thus signifying their willingness to lay their heads on the block if he should so will. This seeming humiliation of these soldiers was well remunerated, as the Sultan halted before the barracks that he passed, and at each one drank a cup of sherbet, the cup being returned full of gold coin.

Within the mosque the sword of Othman is girded on the Sultan before the tomb of S. Ayoub. Only Mussulmans can witness this most solemn ceremony, which remains unchanged to this day.

But the Janissaries no longer exist, and, indeed, many features of the consecration are much modified. When the present Sultan, Abdul Hamid, was "sabred" in 1876, he approached the pier in a caique lined with crimson, rowed by twelve Albanians dressed in white. He was seated beneath a golden canopy, wearing a plain fez and a cloth cloak, which concealed his dress and jewelled orders.

From the pier he rode alone on a splendid milk-white Arab horse, that stepped proudly, as if honored by his



burden. The young Sultan made no acknowledgment of the cheers which greeted him. Perhaps he knew that those who cheered performed a part which had been assigned them. He did not raise his eyes; and his gloomy, melancholy face was utterly devoid of any expression of pleasure, while he nervously stroked his beardless chin, as is his constant habit. While on the way to Ayoob, Hamid visited the tomb of his father, Abdul Medjid, at the mosque of Mohammed II.

If the Sultan avoided the appearance of splendour, not so his cortége. He was preceded by pashas, ministers, beys, and other officials in pairs, wearing splendidly laced uniforms, decorated with glittering orders, and mounted on richly caparisoned steeds. Following him were companies of soldiers of various ranks, in brilliantly coloured uniforms, and full turbans with gold bands. Next came the holy man, the Sheikh-ul-Islam, making a picturesque feature of the spectacle in his pure white garb. It was his high official duty and privilege to confer the sacred sword upon the Sultan. Closing the procession were the religious dignitaries, guarded on the rear by squadrons of horse, all followed by many closed carriages filled by Turkish ladies of high degree.

To return once more to Mohammed II., whose learning was phenomenal, and who pretended to a devotion to his religion which should have inspired some love for God's creatures, we find that neither religion nor learning prevented his being almost or quite a fiend in cruelty. Perhaps the deeds of a savage on a battle-field, when his worst passions are aroused, can be palliated; but for the brutality of Mohammed, whose sobriety is fully attested in the annals of his country, no excuse can be found. If we refuse to believe the curious tales concerning his ripping up of fourteen pages to find a stolen melon, or his striking off the head of a beautiful slave to prove that he

was not ruled by love, or his beheading a slave to show Gentile Bellini the proper action of the muscles, we must still acknowledge that he shed torrents of blood in his rage at the slightest provocation, and indulged his abnormal passions in the most revolting manner.

“He was doubtless a soldier, and possibly a general. Constantinople has sealed his glory; but if we compare the means, the obstacles, and the achievements, Mohammed II. must blush to sustain a parallel with Alexander or Timour.”<sup>1</sup>

The superiority of the early Ottoman rulers is generally admitted by historians. The Ottoman people, too, were superior in the strength of their religious convictions, their temperance and morality, and in their habit of absolute obedience, which made it easy to discipline their army. The Sultans were successful organizers. They administered justice equitably; and their unique plan of diminishing the power of Christianity by educating Christian youths for their civil and military service, supplied the ruler with a large body of servants who, being free from all natural ties, became devoted to the power which — though it had wrenched them from home and friends — had given them the education that fitted them for the lofty positions and great power to which they not infrequently attained.

It is easily seen that such a nation would be vastly superior to the corrupt and demoralized population of Constantinople, — made up, as it was, of various races, steeped in indolence and luxury on the one hand, and in the depths of the most abject poverty and misery on the other, with the additional element of mercantile Italians, who had exiled themselves for the sake of money-making, and, having neither affection nor loyalty for the Eastern Empire, hesitated at no deed which might increase their profits.

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

But the Sultans were not all Mohammeds. Even the conqueror's son, Bayezid II., who succeeded his father, was a weak, indolent prince, who added neither to the power nor the extent of the empire. He was a dreamy man, whose personality seems to pervade his mosque, the chief monument to his reign.

Its court is darkened and shaded by plane and cypress trees, and under its cloister dark-faced men sell the Oriental goods which harmonize so well with the columns of porphyry and verd antique. In the centre of the court is a fountain; and an attendant is always near, to whom one may give a coin if he wishes to see the famous pigeons of Bayezid. Myriads of these gray birds flutter down from roof and minaret when the corn is scattered; and though the court is never clean, one is glad that their lives are sacred, and glad also to remember the legend that they are all descended from the pair bought by the Sultan from a poor woman, — a gentle story is so rare in the history of his race.

On Friday there is here a distribution of food to dogs; and hundreds assemble, some of them coming great distances.

But alas! there was another side to the nature of Bayezid II. Once in the midst of a frolic, when the wine of Cyprus had made both the Sultan and his vizier careless and bold, Bayezid spoke insultingly to his leader of the Janissaries; and that officer replied by asking him who had placed him on the throne, and by what power he retained it. Deep silence fell on all present; and when the robes of honour were distributed, a black one was given to the Agha, who rose and at once prepared to die.

"Stay," cried the Sultan, — "stay, I have not done with you!" as the mutes prepared to beat the old man before he should be murdered. The Agha, having now nothing to lose, called out, "Base wretch! if you had willed my

death, why did you first defile my soul by making me drink wine ? ”

But the time came when Bayezid II. drained the cup of bitterness to its dregs. Old and feeble, he was one day visited by a vast concourse of Janissaries, Spahis, and common people, who came before his throne demanding the resignation of his power. Twelve thousand Janissaries shouted their battle-cry to emphasize this request, and Bayezid hastened to abdicate in favour of his son Selim. Shouts of joy pealed through the palace, and were echoed by those outside; while the old man laid off the emblems of sovereignty, and humbly begged permission to retire to his birthplace. Selim walked beside his father's palanquin as far as the gate of the city, and saw him depart. On the third day the old man died, forsaken and unmourned, but fortunate in that he had been spared the fatal bowstring.

Selim I., called “the Grim,” having deposed his father, at once murdered seven brothers and nephews who might aspire to his throne. So cruel was he that no one could serve him without the fear of death constantly in mind. He killed off his grand viziers so rapidly, and for such slight faults, that one of them said to him, “My Padishah, I know that sooner or later thou wilt find some pretext for putting me to death. Permit me, therefore, to arrange my affairs in this world, and make ready for being sent to the next by thee.”

Selim laughed savagely, and replied, “I have thought for some time of having thee killed; but as I have no one suitable to take thy place, I must defer it a little.”

Selim was the first Sultan who attained to the title and power of the Caliphate, which added to his consideration and dignity in the same manner as it would increase the importance of a Western emperor to be also the Pope. The first four caliphs were friends of the Prophet him-



self; and after them the office passed successively to the Omniade Caliphs, the Abbassides, and to their descendants in Egypt, from the last of whom the high office of spiritual head of Islam was transferred to Selim I., from whom it has descended to all the Ottoman Sultans. The sacred standard, the sword, and the mantle of the Prophet passed into the keeping of Sultan Selim I.

Selim was a successful warrior. He added to the power and dignity of his kingdom by conquests. He built ships and improved his seaports. He brought to Constantinople from the capital of Persia, which he conquered, a thousand skilled workmen, and gave them houses that he might profit by their exquisite art to beautify his capital. From Cairo he sent such treasures to Constantinople that a thousand camels were required to carry the gold and silver alone. His administrative talents were admirable. He was a bigot in religion, and absolutely sincere. He patronized literature liberally, and was himself an eminent scholar. In short, having become emperor of a newly conquered and disordered empire, in a reign of nine years, he accomplished a wonderful work, and left a kingdom fitted to serve for the glory of so great a sovereign as his son Suleiman proved to be.

The reign of Suleiman the Great, 1520-1556, was a magnificent period in all Europe, as well as in the Ottoman Empire. Suleiman was called "The Perfecter of the Perfect Number," being tenth in descent from the founder of his dynasty. Orientals attach great importance to numbers, and ten is believed to be the most fortunate one. It was singularly prominent in all that concerned Suleiman, especially in the fact above stated, and in that his reign opened the tenth century of the Hegira, while in the course of his experience the decimal had a frequently recurring prominence, and was believed to have a happy influence on his life.



He was the contemporary of Charles V., Francis I., Henry VIII., and Queen Elizabeth; of Pope Leo X., of the founder of the Russian power, Vasili Ivanovich; of Sigismund of Poland; Shah Ismail of Persia, and the Mogul Emperor Akbar; and among these no one could be called greater than Suleiman the Magnificent.

“The century of Columbus, of Cortes, of Drake and Raleigh, of Spenser and Shakespeare, the epoch that saw the revival of learning in Italy by the impulse of the refugees from Constantinople, and which greeted at once the triumph of Christianity over Islam in Spain, and the opening of a new world by Spanish enterprise, was hardly more brilliant in the West than in the East, where the unceasing victories of Suleiman, and the successes of Turghud and Barbarossa formed a worthy counterpart to the achievements of the great soldiers and admirals of the Atlantic. Even the pirates of the age were unique; they founded dynasties. But the most remarkable feat that the Turks achieved during this glorious century was — that they survived it. With such forces as were arrayed against them, with a Europe roused from its long sleep, and ready to seize arms and avenge its long disgrace upon the infidels, it was to be expected that the fall of the Ottoman power must ensue. Instead, we shall see that this power was not only able to meet the whole array of rejuvenated Europe on equal terms, but emerged from the conflict stronger and more triumphant than ever.”<sup>1</sup>

Körner, in his “Zriny,” puts these words into the mouth of Suleiman:—

“I have lived for all time; of that I’m conscious,—  
And on the immortal stars have knit my fame.  
I had subdued the world had I been born  
Sole hero of my age. My toil was harder,  
My century was rich in mighty spirits,  
And many and strong were they who strove with me.  
I scorn the name of Fortune’s favorite.  
With resolute force I wrung from destiny  
What had to fond entreaties been denied.”

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole.

The entire history of this great Caliph-Sultan is most interesting, from the time when at twenty years of age his father left him to act as viceroy while he went to war with Persia, to the day when he died in his tent before Szigeth; but we can only speak of what concerned his capital.

At his death his empire embraced many of the most beautiful spots in the world, and extended over forty thousand square miles. Never again did it enjoy such prosperity or wield such power as under Suleiman, the Lord of his Age. We should not look upon the cruel and blamable aspects of the character of Suleiman alone. He could also be generous and warm-hearted, and was free from the depraved sensuality of many Turks.

“We must remember his princely courage, his military genius, his high and enterprising spirit, his strict observance of the laws of his religion without any taint of bigoted persecution, the order and economy which he combined with so much grandeur and munificence, his liberal encouragement of art and literature, his zeal for the diffusion of education, the conquests by which he extended his empire, and the wise and comprehensive legislation with which he provided for the good government of all his subjects; let him be thus taken for all in all, and we shall feel his incontestable right to the title of a great sovereign, which now for three centuries he has maintained.”<sup>1</sup>

Suleiman was an only son, and therefore not guilty of fratricide on coming to the throne. Among his first acts, as emperor, he gave permission to six hundred Egyptians, who had been forcibly brought to Constantinople, to return to their homes. He reimbursed merchants who had suffered loss through the injustice of his father. He executed officials convicted of cruel and unlawful acts, and thus displayed both generosity and justice in his treatment of his subjects.

<sup>1</sup> Sir E. S. Creasy.

The splendid public works of Suleiman in his capital recall the days of Justinian; but in this regard, and in his legislation only, can the Roman emperor be estimated as the equal of the Turk. Not only was Constantinople improved and embellished, but in other cities of his empire his love of architecture was displayed. The great aqueduct and the arsenal of the capital were paralleled by the restoration of the aqueducts of Mecca and the building of the bridge at Tschekmedji.

While improving his cities, increasing his army and navy, and building immense storehouses for the supplies of fleets and camps, Suleiman did not neglect the poets, historians, and other writers, who flourished in unusual numbers under his patronage. His own diaries are important to the history of his time, and his dignified poems are worthy of a place in the literature of his race.

The blackest stains on the record of Suleiman's life are the executions of statesmen — even of his favourite Ibrahim — and the murders of his children. Some of these are attributable to the influence which his Sultana Roxalana acquired over him. In submitting to this influence he showed the chief weakness of his life, and some of his greatest crimes were hers rather than the Sultan's.

The story of the Grand Vizier Ibrahim is as interesting as it is tragical. The son of a sailor at Parga, captured by corsairs, sold as a slave to a widow, he passed into the service of Suleiman when, as a young prince, he was the governor of Magnesia. The master and slave were sympathetic in their tastes, and soon loved each other tenderly. Ibrahim's learning was phenomenal, and he was able not only to amuse Suleiman, but to impart to him much that he desired to know. They were almost inseparable, even sleeping in the same apartment. Suleiman was proud to bestow his sister upon his friend in marriage, and raised him to the highest office in the

gift of the Sultan, which Ibrahim richly merited; for not only was he an acceptable companion in times of peace, but a great warrior also, and a statesman who, by his counsel, encouraged Suleiman to some of the important conquests of his reign.

Ibrahim possessed great personal courage, and could appease the Janissaries when they were rebellious as no other man could do. Suleiman showered riches and honours upon his vizier. He stripped the marbles from the walls and seats of the Circus, and despoiled other splendid edifices, in order to increase the magnificence of the palace which he built for Ibrahim. The fêtes on the occasion of the marriage of his favourite and his sister proved the Sultan's generosity and affection. But this propitious union, of which we are told that "the empire felt the benefit from hour to hour," endured but six years. Suleiman began to dread the power of his vizier, and even his affection for him and his close relations with him could not induce a Turkish Sultan to permit a man whom he feared to live.

Ibrahim went one day to dine with Suleiman, as usual, and did not return home that night. When search was made for him next day, he was found dead under conditions that proved that he had struggled valiantly for life. Suleiman deeply regretted this act, but his repentance could not erase the blood stains from his palace walls nor from his memory; for wherever this great ruler is praised he is also blamed for this and other examples of his unbridled cruelty.

Tragic and terrible as the fate of Ibrahim, that of the eldest son of the Sultan is far more so, and was brought about by his favourite Sultana, a Russian girl called Khourrem — "the joyous one" — or "La Rossa," who is known to Europeans as Roxalana. Her attractions and her intuitive knowledge of how to please and amuse



Suleiman gave her such power over him that she retained her place in his affections until her death, in 1558, after which he erected her tomb near his own and close to his magnificent mosque. It is embowered in trees; and though its interior is now neglected and dusty, it still bears witness before the world to the fond affection which this greatest of Sultans lavished on Roxalana.

Incomprehensibly cruel and wicked as she seems to us, there is an excuse which is sometimes made for her, as it is for Lady Macbeth, — that her ambition for her husband, whom she devotedly loved, led her to persuade him to damning deeds of blood. When the question with Roxalana was the murder of Ibrahim, this consideration might be admissible, especially in such a time and under such a rule as that of Suleiman; but what shall we offer as her excuse when she persuades her husband to murder his own son, in order that *her* ambition may be realized by seeing her son the indisputable successor of his father? We fear that the best that can be said for Roxalana is that she was a woman of a remarkably clear intelligence and strong character, who hesitated at no crime that could enhance the power and dignity of the only beings whom she loved, — her husband and her sons.

Prince Mustapha was born of a Circassian before Suleiman had seen Roxalana, and he was the natural heir to the throne. But the Sultana had no thought save that of the death of Mustapha, in order that her eldest son, Selim, might be sure of the succession. She had a son-in-law, Roostem Pasha, who, having been raised to the highest position that existed under the Sultan, by the influence of the Sultana, was a supple instrument with which to work her will.

Prince Mustapha was a gifted man, full of activity and grace of person, intelligence, spirit, and courage. He had been intrusted with civil and military authority, and



even seemed likely to surpass his father in such qualities as distinguished the powerful rulers of his house. But the industrious whispering of Roostem Pasha and the Sultana sowed the fatal seeds of distrust and fear, and the Sultan, now growing old, was reminded that his father, Selim, had dethroned his grandfather, Bayezid. Mustapha was so great a favourite with the army and the people that the insinuations of the Sultana seemed to be fully confirmed by what Suleiman could himself see and hear whenever Mustapha rode through the streets. At length the Sultan was persuaded that he was not safe in Constantinople, and he repaired to the headquarters of the army, taking Selim, the son of Roxalana, with him.

Soon after Suleiman reached the camp, Prince Mustapha also arrived and pitched his tent near that of his father. Next morning he was splendidly dressed, and rode his fine charger with such grace as aroused the enthusiasm of the viziers and Janissaries who attended him as he went to pay his respects to the Sultan. Leaving his attendants, he passed alone into the royal tent, where he saw, not his father, but the seven mutes, so well known as the ministers of death. They sprang upon him, and passed the bowstring round his neck, while he vainly called on his father for mercy. Some accounts say that Suleiman, impatient of the length of time it took to kill his son, looked into the apartment to hasten the mutes in their execution of his bidding. Meantime some of Mustapha's attendants were murdered on the outside of the tent; and when the news of the tragedy reached the soldiers, and especially the Janissaries, they were so outraged against Roostem Pasha, to whom they attributed this slaughter, that they demanded his punishment. In order to allay the excitement, Roostem was deposed from his high office, but was restored to it two years later.

Dreadful as was this crime, still worse was to follow;

for after the death of the Sultana, her two sons, Selim and Bayezid, became deadly rivals. At first the tutor of the princes favoured Bayezid; but finding that he would be better paid by Selim, he espoused his cause, and represented Bayezid to the Sultan as an ungrateful child, while he impressed the prince with the idea that his father was a tyrant, who was determined to be freed from his younger, as he had been from his elder son.

Selim was weak and dissolute, and most unpopular on account of his resemblance to his mother; while Bayezid was like his father in person, intellect, character, and accomplishments, and as much in general favour as Mustapha had been. Bayezid commanded respect also as a military leader; but he suffered a defeat in 1559, after which, with his four sons, he took refuge with the Shah of Persia. Suleiman sternly demanded that his son and his grandsons should be sent to him or murdered where they were. Prince Selim sent emissaries to slay them. The Shah feared to disobey the Sultan, and the terrible sentence of Suleiman was executed. The Persians poured forth curses on the Sultan, on Prince Selim, and on the executioners without stint; and the remaining years of Suleiman were clouded by sorrows and military failures. Shortly before his death Bayezid wrote an elegiac poem, which thus speaks the sadness of his soul:—

“ Why cling to hopes of life with fond misgiving ?  
Why lengthen out thine hours, my weary heart ?  
For thee is withered all the joy of living :  
To the void realms below thou summoned art.  
Bird of my soul, the cage that round thee prest,  
Is shattered now : hence on free pinion dart.  
In mind and body sick, with sin distrest,  
To thee, my Friend, my God, I come for healing rest.”

The Suleimanyeh is most advantageously situated, and is the most artistic mosque in Constantinople. It is on a high hill, from which the view of the Golden Horn and

the city is especially fine; and at certain hours of the day this panorama is as exquisite in its lighting as it is entrancing in its interest. This majestic mosque, built by Sinan, the most celebrated Ottoman architect, besides its fine interior, has a court, a fountain, beautiful colonnades, twenty-three small domes, and four exquisite minarets, with galleries, from which the muezzins cry the call to prayer.

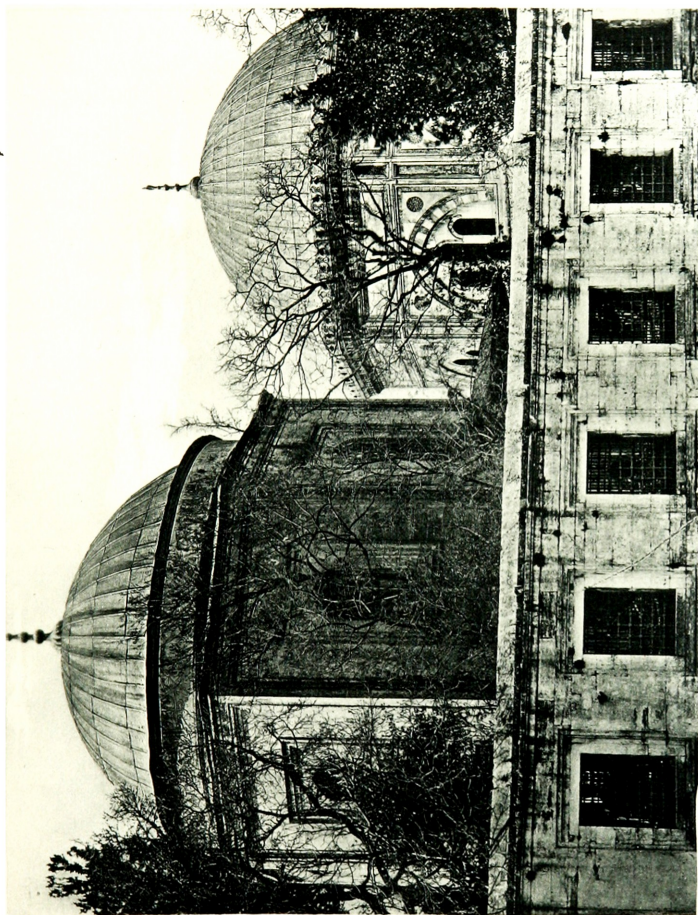
It adds to the interest of the Suleimanyeh that it is an example of Ottoman architecture, intended for its purpose from its foundation; yet it differs from the pure Moslem architecture of other countries, especially in its minarets and domes, in which a Greek influence is felt. Its central dome is seventeen feet higher than that of S. Sophia, and, as might naturally be anticipated, there are some features much the same as in that venerable pile, which may be called the Mother Church or Mosque of Constantinople. Within are many things which must be the same in all mosques, such as the texts inscribed upon the walls, the arrangement of candelabra, the *mihrab*, and the pulpit. The temples of the Prophet seem always cold and desolate to Christians, who are not permitted to enter during service, but must go in slippers, when but a few figures at prayer, as immovable as if dead, are all that can be seen.

There are some rare and beautiful objects in the Suleimanyeh, and the light as it comes through the coloured glass — from the manufactory of Ibrahim, called Sarkhosh or “the Drunkard,” whose glass was celebrated for its beauty in the middle of the sixteenth century — imparts a charm not common to mosques. The windows are painted in a design in which flowers are mingled with the name of God, in the ornamental text used for such inscriptions. It is said that two of them were a part of the spoil brought by Suleiman from Persia, whence came



*Tombs of Sultan Suleiman and Sultana Roxalana.*







also the brilliant tiles upon the walls. The dome rests on four monolithic columns of ancient Constantinople, two of which once upheld the Venus and the statue of Justinian, while the others are said to have supported those of Theodora and Eudoxia in the imperial palace.

The mosque itself, with its forecourt and its churchyard, are surrounded by a still larger court having ten gates. In the cemetery near the tomb of Roxalana, of which we have spoken, is that of Suleiman the Magnificent, who does not sleep alone in his splendid mausoleum. Suleiman II. and his daughters, and Sultan Ahmed II. are also entombed here. The edifice is octagonal, with a fluted roof. There are exquisite marbles without and within, and the interior of the dome is painted in a design of delicate, lace-like arabesques. The costly decorations of the biers — embroideries, shawls, turbans, and aigrettes, mother-of-pearl work, and other exquisite details — are curiously out of keeping with Christian customs, but are expressive of reverence and honour to the Sultan who raised the Ottoman Empire to its highest glory.

Connected with the Suleimanyeh are four academies, three schools, a hospital, a kitchen for feeding the poor, a school of medicine, and another especially for the reading of the Koran, a library, a fountain, a resting-place for travellers, and a house of refuge for strangers. The income of the Suleimanyeh must have been enormous when all these institutions were properly supported.

Certainly it is no small tribute to a monarch that such a monument as this mosque and its dependencies should bear his name, which has been thus repeated by men of all nations thousands of times each year through century after century. A Christian ruler would have dedicated the temple he had built to the Holy Trinity or to some saint; but these Sultans, while they made a great show of

reverence for the Prophet, knew of no name to give their mosques better than their own; and Suleiman merited this honour more than any other of his race.

He was an unusual man. On one side of his nature savage and cruel, he was yet capable of faithful affection. So much did he know of architecture that he could easily have been the sole architect of the edifices he erected. He passionately loved music and poetry, but he put aside the self-indulgence of his race, and devoted himself to making his arms respected at home and abroad, on land and sea; and he tranquilly died in his tent while his troops were pressing forward to win one great victory more, as their final offering to their greatest Sultan.

## CHAPTER VIII.

SELIM II. TO ABDUL MEJID — THREE CENTURIES OF DECLINE.

1566-1861.

WE have seen what, in its way, may well be called a Wonder of the World, as we have traced the rise of the Ottoman Power. A small band of Moslems, who controlled a little patch of Asia Minor, after three centuries commanded in Europe the Mediterranean and the Black Seas, with the lesser waters between, and in Africa the Red Sea, while their territory was bounded by Mecca and Buda, by Bagdad and Algiers.

From the time of Suleiman the course of the empire has been reversed, and the growth of the three preceding centuries has been followed by an equal period of decay, the wonder now being that it survives at all. What keeps the "sick man" alive? Two causes contribute to this end, and seem to be the only ones. The first is that the Sultan is also the Caliph of the Prophet; the second, that he has retained the key to the situation, Constantinople. As the possession of this capital prolonged the Roman and the later Byzantine rule, so it to-day serves the Turk, aided as he is to keep this stronghold by the powers of Western Europe, even though they know, as has been well said, that "the rule of the Turk, by whatever diplomatic euphemisms it may be called, means the bondage and degradation of all who come beneath his rule."<sup>1</sup>

We will not review in detail the sickening and decline of the beautiful city on the Bosphorus. Selim II. is

<sup>1</sup> E. A. Freeman.



remembered as the conqueror of Cyprus and the loser of the battle of Lepanto, which occurrence greatly cheered his enemies because it proved that the Turk was not invincible. But why did they leave it there? Why not have taken Constantinople rather than give Selim the Sot an opportunity to refit his navy and strengthen himself in every way? This was the single occasion when he acted on a noble impulse, when in a spasm of patriotism he gave a portion of his pleasure-gardens on Seraglio Point for the building of docks, and contributed large sums from his private purse to restore what had been lost.

His successor, Murad III., was a feeble wretch, ruled by women, among whom there was fortunately one of intelligence and determination, a Venetian, known as the Sultana Safiye. She ruled the Sultan, and through him the country, in the interests of the Republic of Venice; and though various other women succeeded her in Murad's favour, she outwitted them in placing her son Mohammed III. upon the throne. Murad left twenty sons and twenty-seven daughters living at his death, and fifty-three others had died before him.

Murad's mother, the famous Nour Banore, used all her influence against Safiye; but the Sultan could refuse her nothing, and it was in honour of the Venetian's son that the magnificent fêtes were given of which the French ambassador of the time wrote a description. The Hippodrome was divided into kiosks, which were gilded and decorated with rich hangings and beautiful flowers for the use of the Sultan, the son of Safiye, and the Sultanas; while a separate building was devoted to the ambassadors, the viziers, and other officials. A large tent served for the distribution of sherbets and the delicious Turkish sweets, and the centre of the Hippodrome was illuminated by means of poles supporting hoops, from which millions of

small lamps were suspended, as they are now used in mosque illuminations.

The fêtes continued through several days. On the first the Sultan, surrounded by his court, with his son, the future Sultan, by his side, made a grand progress from the Seraglio to the Hippodrome. The Prince was gorgeously dressed in scarlet satin. His turban was decorated with heron's plumes, while his ears and hand supported jewels beyond price. Representations of all sorts of animals made in sugar were borne by fifteen horses splendidly accoutred in the richest stuffs. The marriage palms, ninety feet high, were hung with an endless variety of symbolic toys, and so huge were they that houses and walls were pulled down to make a passage for them.

The trades processions, bearing gifts, and endeavouring to outdo all other features of the fêtes, were admirable. There were tournaments and quadrilles with chariots; and the men, dressed in splendid stuffs and embroideries, represented different trades.

The dervishes, in their white robes and conical caps, whirled in their dances. Some held red-hot irons in their mouths; others swallowed knives. One was whirling in a barrel of serpents; another danced on pointed sabres; and all these things were done in the sight of the harem, the ladies being behind a grill. The shrill cry of the dervishes, "Allah, Allah!" added greatly to the excitement.

There were splendid banquets to the Capitan Pasha, to the Greeks in their native costumes, to the Janissaries, which required sixty tables, each with high officials at the head; to archers, guards, gardeners, muftis, cadis, sheiks, and others until all were fed. The feasts were interrupted by various spectacles, one of which represented a wedding. Thirty beys, magnificently dressed,

personated brides and bridegrooms, and several times performed the dance, which represents the labyrinth of Crete in its figures, called the Romaïka; and again they danced the lascivious Egyptian dances.

All this occupied some days, and on the final one the circumcision of the princes took place, with certain ceremonies so savage that the origin of the Sultans could not be forgotten.

The finale of this merriment was one of the ever-recurring revolts of the Janissaries and the Spahis, or royal horse guards, with the usual accompaniment of a fire; and the passage of the curtained litters from the Hippodrome to the Seraglio was attended with considerable danger.

Mohammed III. left no effort untried to make his position secure. On his accession he murdered nineteen brothers, and had seven slaves, who were about to become mothers, sewed in sacks and drowned. This was the most numerous sacrifice made by any one Sultan to the law of Mohammed II.

Previous to this reign the hereditary princes had been entrusted with the government of the provinces and military commands. From this time they were confined to a particular portion of the palace called "the cage," which they left but to go to the throne or the grave. This cage was in a solitary garden, built like a temple without windows and lighted from the top. It had but a single small iron door, against which a great stone was rolled.

"Kept in a kind of imprisonment till they came to the throne, with every means of enjoying themselves, but with no means of learning the duties of rulers, they came forth from prison to be clothed with absolute power. One is really inclined to wonder that they were not even worse than they were, and that any of them showed any sign of virtue or ability of any kind."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Freeman.

Passing over the reigns of Ahmed I., Othman II., and Mustapha I., we come to the time of which the minister of King James I. said that the Ottoman power "had become like an old body crazed through many vices, which remain when the youth and strength are decayed." What has prolonged the days of this weakness two hundred and fifty years? Freeman answers this question when he says, "The Turkish power has been propped up by the wicked policy of the governments of Western Europe."

Murad IV. was the most bloodthirsty of all these brutal rulers, and was also the last soldier of his race. He must have been strong in character. Coming to the throne at twelve years of age, and ruling an empire overrun with rebellion and suffering constant disaster, it seems little less than a miracle that he was not sacrificed to the ambitions by which he was surrounded. Doubtless he owed his preservation to his mother, the Valideh Mahpeike.

Constantinople was crowded with a famine-stricken people and a licentious, savage soldiery. When the young Sultan visited the treasury and saw its emptiness, he exclaimed: "Inshallah — please God — I will replenish the treasury fifty-fold with the property of those who have plundered it."

With care and cunning, in the midst of hourly peril, he succeeded in coming to man's estate. He observed keenly, and forgot nothing. Above all, he did not forget to avenge himself later for matters that it was unwise to notice at first.

Constantinople was always a hotbed for insurrections and mutinies; and the rising of the Spahis, in the ninth year of this reign, was memorable for itself, and to it may be attributed the unusual ferocity and thirst for blood by which the Sultan was ever after characterized. The object of the mutiny was the ruin of the Grand Vizier Hafiz, the Sultan's favourite.



The Spahis gathered in the Hippodrome on three successive days, and demanded seventeen heads of the Sultan, that of Hafiz being first on the list. The entire capital was in terror. Business was suspended, and bazaars and shops closed; even the Seraglio was no longer felt to be safe. On the second day the insurgents were promised satisfaction on the morrow; and when the sun rose on that morning, the Seraglio was surrounded, and the outer court filled with Spahis determined to be put off no longer.

When on his way to the Seraglio, Hafiz was counselled to hide himself. He answered that he did not fear to die, and already knew his fate, as he had seen it in a dream. He entered the Seraglio, and was struck from his horse by the stones thrown at him. One of his attendants was killed by the Spahis, while his master was borne into the palace. The Sultan, desiring to save Hafiz from his fate, sent him from the water gate of the Seraglio across to Scutari. By this time the rebels had filled the second court where the Divan was usually held. They clamoured for the Sultan, who soon appeared, and, standing before them, demanded their wishes. The mutineers fiercely answered: "Give us the seventeen heads! Give us these men or it will fare the worse with thee!" The savage crowd pressed closely about Murad, and gave no heed to his words; and so threatening was their bearing that the Sultan's attendants drew him within the inner court, and fortunately succeeded in barring the gate in time to shut out the furious mob, which now shouted again and again, "The seventeen heads, or abdicate!"

The real instigators of the uprising, the deadly enemies of Hafiz, now seriously represented to the young Sultan that his own head was in imminent peril if he refused the demands of the Spahis. Sadly he recalled Hafiz, and met him at the water gate. Murad then proceeded to the inner court, ascended the throne, and received the deputies of the



rebels. He implored them not to profane his honour as Caliph; but their only reply was, "The seventeen heads!"

Meantime Hafiz had performed the ablutions and ceremonies preparatory for death, and now presented himself, saying:—

" 'My Padishah, let a thousand slaves such as Hafiz perish for thy sake. I only entreat that thou do not thyself put me to death, but give me up to these men, that I may die a martyr, and that my innocent blood may come upon their heads. Let my body be buried at Scutari.' He then kissed the earth, and exclaimed, 'In the name of God, the All-merciful, the All-good. There is no power or might save with God, the most High, the Almighty. His we are, and unto Him we return.' Hafiz then strode forth, a hero, into the fatal court. The Sultan sobbed aloud, the pages wept bitterly, the viziers gazed with tearful eyes. The rebels rushed to meet him as he advanced. To sell his life as a martyr, he struck the foremost to the ground with a well-aimed buffet, on which the rest sprang on him with their daggers, and pierced him with seventeen mortal wounds. A Janissary knelt on his breast and struck off his head. The pages of the Seraglio came forward and spread a robe over the corpse. Then said the Sultan, 'God's will be done! But in His appointed time ye shall meet with vengeance, ye men of blood, who have neither the fear of God before your eyes, nor respect for the law of the Prophet.' The threat was little heeded at the time, but it was uttered by one who never menaced in vain."<sup>1</sup>

Many other victims were sacrificed to the rebellious troops. The deposition of Murad was freely discussed, and he began to learn the Turkish lesson, "Kill or be killed." He surrounded himself with some of the better men of his empire; and a little later, his plans being made, Murad held a public divan on the seashore, and summoned a deputation of the Spahis to attend him. Meantime he addressed the Janissaries, assuming that

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Creasy.

they were faithful to him. They replied to him with enthusiastic loyalty, and on the Koran took the oath of fealty. When the deputies of the Spahis arrived, and witnessed this oath of the Janissaries, they knew but too well that unless they were submissive also, the Janissaries would soon exterminate them; and so, when the oath was required of them, they took it with fear and haste.

Murad next commanded the presence of the judges, and accused them of selling their judgments. They replied that they were intimidated by the rebels, and one brave judge exclaimed, "My Padishah, the only cure for all these troubles is by the edge of the sword." The whole assembly gazed on this man, and his words were registered.

The terrific vengeance of the Sultan was speedily put in hand; and all over the provinces, but especially in Constantinople, the work of death went on. The scimitar and bowstring were never idle. Murad was avenged for his humiliation. The frightful slaughter was conducted by his own orders. Each morning saw piles of corpses on the shores of the Bosphorus, which had been thrown up at night; and among them the people recognized the Spahis and Janissaries who had so proudly dictated to the Sultan.

Murad was now twenty years old. He was manly and handsome, and of a demeanour which emphasized the awe which his ferocity inspired. He rode in the Hippodrome each day, and displayed his strength and skill in the use of both bow and sword. By night he rambled over the city in disguise, and with his own hand inflicted fatal punishment on those who were disobeying his police regulations. Did crowds gather, the Sultan was soon in their midst, well armed and well guarded. He feared neither Spahis nor Janissaries; and they hastened from his sight, fearful lest his eagle eye should recognize them, and their doom be pronounced.

Thus murder became Murad's habit. Small offences were punished equally with greater, until those who knew that they were to meet him made the death ablution as their appropriate preparation. He became so moody that he imagined wrong where none existed. On one occasion a party of women whose only offence was that of dancing in a meadow, were drowned by his order, because he could not endure the sight of merriment. Again, a boat filled with women passed too near the palace to please him, and he turned his batteries on them and sent them to the bottom, while he watched the scene. He killed his chief musician for singing a Persian air, which he chose to construe as doing honour to his enemies.

As this Sultan grew older, he had the habit of intoxication, and language fails to depict his cruelty; but on one occasion the wit of his victim saved his life. "The son of a slave," is a term often applied by the Turks to their ruler; and on one of his nocturnal excursions he met Mustapha Bekir, a famous drunkard, who told Murad that he possessed that which would buy all Constantinople, even "the son of a slave" himself. Next morning Mustapha was brought before the Sultan, who reminded him of his words, whereupon Bekir drew a flask of wine from his robe, and gave it to the Sultan, saying, "Here is a liquid gold, which outweighs the treasures of the universe, for it makes a beggar more glorious than a king, and turns the mendicant Fakir into a horned Alexander." Murad was pleased with the bold joyousness of the drunkard. He took the flask and drained it, and was thenceforward a boon companion to Mustapha Bekir.

When hundreds of people were daily dying in Constantinople of the plague, Murad passed his nights in revels, saying: "This summer God is punishing the rogues; perhaps by winter He will come to the honest men."

Strangely enough, however, when his duties required

his attention, his abstemiousness and vigilance were unequalled, and his ability to labour was phenomenal. He was a thorough disciplinarian, not only in military, but in civil affairs. He put an end to the power which had been usurped by the petty tyrants who had flourished under his predecessors. He instituted just tribunals, and insisted that the revenues should be promptly raised and honestly expended.

In the early years of his reign he could not leave Constantinople with safety to his government or to himself. When, after ten years, he went to Nicomedia, he hanged the chief judge because the roads were badly kept. The news of this act created an excitement in the capital, and the Valideh Mahpeike informed Murad of what was said of him. He at once returned to Constantinople, and put the Grand Mufti — the spiritual chief of Islam and the head of legislation — to death. This is the sole instance of the execution of a Mufti by a Sultan's command.

The story of the military achievements of Murad IV. does not belong here; but so great was his success in Persia, that for eighty years that power, always so troublesome, ceased its attacks on Turkey. On his return from the conquest of Bagdad, in June, 1638, the Sultan made a triumphal entry into Constantinople, which was described by a Turkish historian who is cited by Hulme. He says: —

“The Sultan repaired to his palace with splendour and magnificence which no tongue can tell, and no pen adequately illustrate. The balconies and roofs of the houses were everywhere thronged with people, who exclaimed with enthusiasm, ‘The blessing of God be on thee, O Conqueror! Welcome, Amurath! May thy victories be fortunate!’ The Sultan was sheathed in resplendent armour of polished steel, with a leopard-skin over his shoulders, and wore in his turban a triple aigrette, placed obliquely, in the Persian mode. He rode a Nogai charger, and



was followed by seven led Arab horses with jewelled caparisons, while trumpets and cymbals resounded before him, and twenty-two Persian Khans were led captive at the imperial stirrups. As he passed along, he looked proudly on each side, like a lion who has seized his prey, and saluted the people, who shouted 'Barik-Allah!' and threw themselves on the ground. All the vessels of war fired constant salutes, so that the sea seemed in a blaze; and seven days and nights were devoted to constant rejoicings."

This pageant assumes important proportions when we know that it was the last spectacle witnessed in Constantinople in celebration of the triumphal return of a Sultan who had personally conducted his armies, and we cannot realize when we see the Europeanized capital of our time that such barbaric splendours could have been habitual here for many centuries.

The final act in Murad's life was consistent with his cruel nature. Whether he desired his favourite to succeed him, or whether it gratified his wicked heart to let his house and dynasty end with him, is not known; but in his last hour he commanded the murder of his only brother, Ibrahim. The Sultana Valideh — mother sultana — preserved Ibrahim's life, but told Murad that his command had been executed. Though absolutely dying, this cruel wretch smiled horribly, and raised himself in bed, hoping to see his brother's dead face; but his attendants held him down, and at that moment the priest entered to read the prayers, which were scarcely begun when the last warrior Sultan ceased to live.

Ibrahim proved the most bestial of his line, which is not surprising when we remember that he had been shut off from the life of the world for years; that he had been in hourly expectation of death, and had been permitted to indulge the animal side of his nature to the fullest extent.



From this time until the beginning of our century the government of Turkey was in the hands of viziers, some of them being men of great talent. There were occasional deeds of courage and probity which indicate that, had their lines fallen in the days when their nation was growing rather than decaying, they would have left names to be remembered.

But there is neither pleasure nor profit in the history of Turkey from the time when the Vizier Mohammed Kinprili executed thirty-six thousand people in five years, and the chief executioner strangled an average of three a day with his own hand, to that when, through the murder of Selim and Mustapha IV., Mahmoud II. became Sultan in 1808.

Besides the execution of the deposed Sultan, Mahmoud II. thought it necessary to drown in sacks one hundred and seventy-four of his wives and odalisques, and to behead a great number of other persons. By these measures he ended the rebellion that had placed him on the throne. On the day of his proclamation as Sultan, at the gate of the Seraglio, thirty-three heads were exposed to public gaze.

His reign of thirty-one years was a period of constant wars without and revolts within; and though on the whole the power of the Ottoman Empire was lessened, and nothing was done to improve or adorn the capital, still there are reasons why Mahmoud II. should be remembered as one of the most enlightened and powerful of the Ottoman rulers. He had employed his years of captivity in study. He introduced beneficial measures in the life of the women of the Seraglio. He also endeavoured to better the conditions of the Christians subject to him, and he must be credited with the attempt to introduce civilization into his domains.

The final levy of boys for the Janissary corps was made in 1675. Three thousand were then recruited. This

custom had already been partly abandoned, as the position was considered so advantageous that it was sought for the Children of the Faithful, and the sons of Janissaries were admitted to their ranks. The levies of Christian children thus came to be made for the corps of one thousand pages of the Seraglio rather than for the Janissaries, and even these were less and less frequent.

The Janissaries, too, had undergone a change. In the fifteenth century they were superior to the European soldiers. In the seventeenth century the European armies had been disciplined and improved, while the Moslem corps was inferior to its first estate, and in every way less effective.

As soon as Mahmoud II. was proclaimed Sultan and the Pasha of Rustchuk, Mustapha Bairactar, was installed as Grand Vizier, the latter made a plan by which to supersede the Janissaries with a new force called the Seymens, a name which had belonged to an ancient Ottoman corps. The Janissaries and the Ulema — men learned in the law — pretended to approve this plan; and Bairactar permitted the Albanian troops which he controlled to depart, not retaining more than four thousand men in Constantinople, on whom he could rely. Fortunately there were, near Scutari, eight thousand Asiatic troops under his friend Cadi Pasha.

When the Janissaries found themselves in so favourable a position, they surrounded the palace of Bairactar and set it on fire. There the Vizier perished, and the Janissaries at once fiercely attacked the new troops; but Cadi Pasha with his men joined the struggle, and for two days there was savage fighting in the streets of Constantinople. Whole districts were destroyed as well as magazines and military stores, and the Janissaries came off victorious. During this struggle the palace gates were closed, and the deposed Sultan, Mustapha IV., was murdered. By this

means Mahmoud II. was the sole survivor of the house of Othman, and he knew that this fact gave him a charmed life. In spite of this he found it necessary to propitiate the Janissaries, and he issued an edict in their favour. All the European innovations which had been introduced were abolished. The old customs were restored, and darkness replaced the gleams of light which had penetrated to the heart of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire.

Still there existed in the capital wise and thoughtful men, who felt that changes must be made and sweeping reforms instituted. But as yet they dared not whisper this, although they were determined to prepare for the time when practical steps could be taken.

Mahmoud II. had a will and a patience that were phenomenal; and although his reign opened with a war with Russia which was terminated by the treaty of Bucharest in 1812, the foes at home were never out of his mind. Success and advantage abroad had little meaning compared with his desire to be master in his own capital. Wherever he went, whatever he did, the knowledge that he was not independent of his own soldiers was a torture to him.

There were abuses in the distant provinces of his empire, where ruling pashas felt and manifested an independence of the Sultan that was exasperating, and even near at home smaller Derébeys disregarded his wishes, and almost set him at defiance. More powerful chiefs, like Mehemet Ali in Egypt and Ali Pasha in Jannina, even threatened the Ottoman Empire with dismemberment, and the former succeeded in so firmly establishing himself in the city of the Mamelukes as to be able to leave to his descendants the power which he had won. But the splendid and cruel "old lion of Jannina" was lured into the power of Mahmoud's general by a pretence of capitulation and traitorously murdered.

The schemes of Mahmoud and his sympathizers for the disbanding of the Janissaries were numerous; but there was ever some circumstance which prevented the accomplishment of so difficult a move as to displace a large body of imperial troops, who had every advantage of place, possession of arms and munitions, and many other equally favourable conditions in their hands.

But finally the end came. Every Janissary was doomed, and the example of Mehemet Ali in the massacre of the Mamelukes was savagely followed, although Mahmoud did not treacherously invite them as friends in order to accomplish his end. The destruction of this corps was the great event in the reign of Mahmoud, and of more importance to Turkey, above all to Constantinople, than the wars with Russia and Egypt.

Mahmoud had made most extensive and careful preparation. Although each year of his reign had been disturbed by the turbulence of the Janissaries; although they had kindled destructive fires and committed other unscrupulous acts of violence in Constantinople, he knew that he must endure all until fully prepared to succeed. A failure would cost him all that he valued. He foresaw, too, that an open battle in the streets must be his method of conquest. He gradually increased his artillery force, and was careful to see that its officers were his faithful supporters until it at length numbered 14,000, and was led by that Ibrahim who, after the day that proved fatal to the Janissaries, was known as Kara Djehennin, — Black Hell.

Moreover Mahmoud had appointed another loyal friend to be the Agha of the Janissaries; and the Grand Vizier, equally devoted to the Sultan, was able to summon a large body of trustworthy troops from the Asiatic shore. Mahmoud had also convinced the Ulema, or Judges, of their error in supporting the Janissaries, who had long



since survived their original usefulness, and were now the curse of Constantinople and other parts of the empire.

It was not his part to institute proceedings against this unruly body. The actual, apparent cause of the end must be some outrageous conduct of the Janissaries themselves. At no time would such an occasion be far distant. There were but brief intervals between the mutinies of this corps, when they gave the signal of revolt by overturning their kettles in the Hippodrome, and proceeded to perpetrate their outrages. When this occurred, on June 15, 1826, the Sultan was ready for the contest. He unfolded the Sacred Standard of the Prophet himself, and called on all true Mohammedans to follow him, their Caliph, as well as their Padishah.

The enthusiasm of the people of Constantinople knew no bounds, and they rallied about Mahmoud by thousands, while the artillery and the Asiatic troops gave more substantial aid. As the Janissaries appeared in the streets, they were met and cut down with grape shot by the soldiers under command of Black Hell. They had intended to go to the Seraglio, but turned back to the Etmeidan or Hippodrome, and there defended themselves with their muskets most courageously. Many were killed, and at length they retreated to their barracks, and prepared to resist desperately the assault they anticipated.

But Mahmoud and his advisers determined not to sacrifice the lives that must be lost by such a method; and, the artillery being properly placed, a continuous shower of shot and shell was mercilessly poured upon the mutineers. Some of them, driven to desperation, sallied forth, weapons in hand, but were quickly shot down even while they begged for mercy. Mahmoud had decreed the absolute extermination of the Janissaries; and that end was accom-



plished when finally the barracks took fire and the last of their number in Constantinople perished in the flames. The Hippodrome was then closed for years.

It is estimated that four thousand Janissaries perished in the capital in that single day, after which Mahmoud proceeded to exterminate the force in all parts of the empire. Their standards were destroyed, and so far as possible no reminder of them was permitted to survive. New troops were organized, and soon numbered forty thousand, and were gradually increased. This vast change had been accomplished by the steadfast will of Mahmoud II., who now proclaimed the name of his new soldiers to be the "Victorious Mahometan Armies," and commanded them to sustain the Ottoman religion and empire. Möltke, in his able history of Mahmoud's reign, says:—

"If Turkey had enjoyed ten years of peace after the destruction of the Janissaries, Sultan Mahmoud's military reforms might in that time have gained some strength; and, supported by an army upon which he could depend, the Sultan might have carried out the needful reforms in the administration of his country, have infused new life into the dead branches of the Ottoman Empire, and made himself formidable to his neighbours. All this was prevented by Russia, which nipped the Sultan's military reforms in the bud."

At all events, the vigour and ability of the Sultan alarmed his enemies, and they hastened to bring confusion to his plans before he could well establish his new policy.

There are few chapters in history more interesting than the entire career of Mahmoud II.; but it has so much more to do with diplomatic affairs, treaties and wars, than with Constantinople, that we must only add that he died July 1, 1839; "and as gallant a spirit left the earth as ever strove against the spites of fortune, as ever toiled

for a nation's good in preparing benefits the maturity of which it was not permitted to behold." <sup>1</sup>

The *turbah* of Mahmoud II. near the Burnt Column is the most splendid, as it is the latest tomb of a Sultan. Its Corinthian style of architecture is certainly out of keeping here, but it is exceedingly attractive in its freshness of white marble and gilt grated windows, as it stands in a luxuriant grove, with bright flower-beds here and there. Besides Mahmoud the Sultana is buried here, her five daughters, and a sister of the Sultan. The biers are covered with richly embroidered velvet, that of "the Reformer" being purple. At the head is his fez, with diamond aigrette and plume. There are shawls of extreme value thrown across these biers. Those of the Sultan and Sultana are surrounded with mother-of-pearl railings, while Koran-stands richly inlaid with silver and mother-of-pearl and massive candlesticks in silver are in profusion. The Korans here are very fine, and are held sacred. The cupola is decorated with stalactites of gold and delicate cornices, while silk damask hangings soften the light. The only thing that is disturbing is a large, cut-glass chandelier, such as one sees in a modern ball-room, and I could but wonder whether it were put there when the tomb was built by Mahmoud six years before his death. It looks more as if Abdul Aziz might have brought it from Paris, and given his father's tomb as bizarre and mongrel an air as he imparted to much else in his city on the Bosphorus.

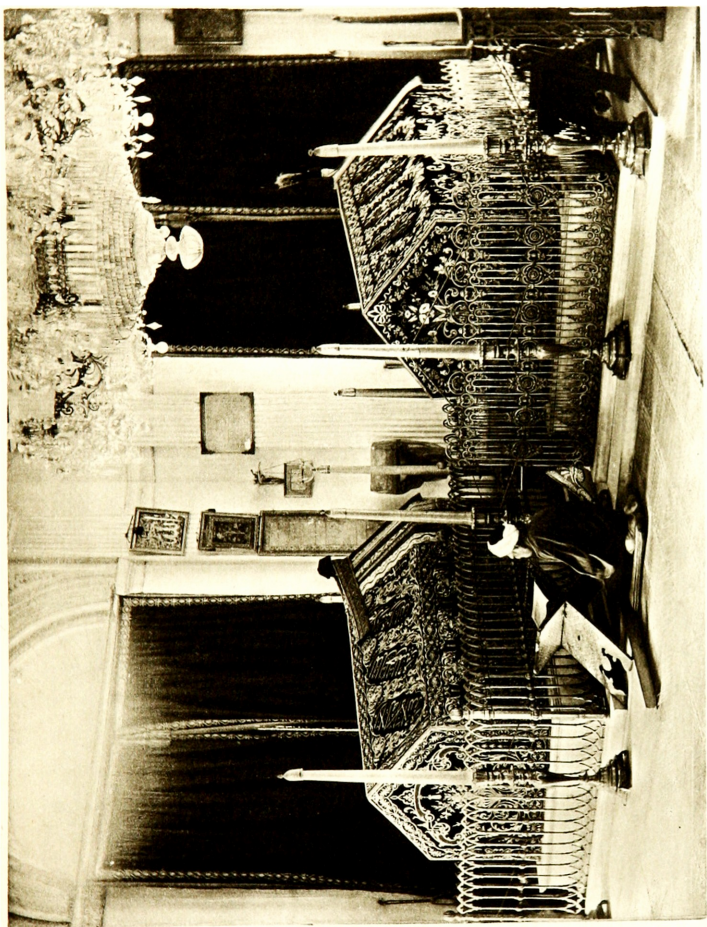
The important matters which had largely occupied Mahmoud II., and continue to be the burning questions with the Sultan of Turkey to-day, are not especially connected with Constantinople, except as it has sometimes seemed likely to pass into other hands than those of the Ottoman rulers.

During Mahmoud's reign, and in the succeeding years the following important events have occurred.

<sup>1</sup> Creasy.



*Tombs of Mahmoud II. and Abdul Aziz.*







In 1832 Greece was made an independent government. In 1840 the position of Mehemet Ali was defined, and he became the Pasha of Egypt, tributary to the Sultan, with the right of succession for his family. In 1841 a convention signed at London by the representatives of England, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, and Turkey, put the Dardanelles and Bosphorus under the control of the Porte, and excluded the war-ships of all nations from these waters. The Crimean War ended in 1855, and the treaty of Paris was signed the following year, by which the Sublime Porte was admitted to participate in the advantages of the Public Law and System of Europe. In the same year the Sultan forbade further importation of slaves into his territory. In 1860 there were serious disturbances in Syria. In 1867 Servia was made independent of the Porte. In 1875 there were serious disturbances in Montenegro and Herzegovina, and in the same year interest was defaulted on the Turkish bonds. Serious troubles which had prevailed in Servia for a long period were settled by a convention in Constantinople in 1877. In March of the same year the first Turkish Parliament was assembled and conducted on English principles. In 1870 a war with Russia occurred, and terms were not made until the Russians were absolutely in sight of Constantinople. A treaty was signed at San Stefano in 1878; but this not proving satisfactory to the European powers, — it was too damaging to Turkey, and Lord Beaconsfield interfered, — a new treaty was made at Berlin in the same year, more to the satisfaction of the European Powers.

We see by this concise review that the present century has brought many changes to the Ottoman Empire; but in the midst of all it has grown more and more decrepit, and it would seem that its end is not far off.

The reform which Mahmoud II. introduced in educating the princes who were possible heirs to the throne was

invaluable; and his eldest surviving son, Abdul Medjid, who came to the throne at sixteen, was a youth of unusual intellectual power, and of earnestness beyond his years. But while he was sincerely desirous of improving the condition of his empire, he was overcome with self-indulgence, and inaugurated such extravagance at his court as brought the country to the verge of bankruptcy. His pageants were magnificent. That of the Lesser Bairam, which occurs at the end of the great fast of Ramadan, the Moslem Lent, and lasts three days, was witnessed by Théophile Gautier in 1853, and we quote from his account of it:—

“The Bairam is a ceremony similar in kind to the hand-kissing in Spain; and all the great dignitaries of the empire come to pay their homage to the Padishah. Turkish magnificence is then seen in all its splendour. . . . Despite the early hour, the Golden Horn, and the large basin which expands at its entrance, presented a most animated scene. All the vessels were decorated with many-coloured flags and streamers, from boom to truck. A vast number of gilded boats, decorated with superb carpets or tapestries, and manned by vigorous oarsmen, flew across the rose-tinted water; and these boats, laden with pashas, viziers, beys, and other dignitaries, were all directing their course towards Seraï-Bournon.

“At length the gates of the Seraglio were thrown open, and we passed through a court lined with cypresses, sycamores, and plane-trees, of enormous size; bordered with kiosks of Chinese design, and buildings with battlemented walls and demi-turrets, resembling somewhat the English feudal architecture,—a *mélange*, in fact, of garden, palace, and fortress; until we reached an inner court, at the angle of which rises the ancient church of Saint Irene, now transformed into an arsenal; and where is also a small building, pierced with numerous windows, and devoted to the use of foreign embassies; from which can be seen all that passes.

“The ceremony commenced with a religious act. The Sultan,

accompanied by his chief officers, goes to perform his devotions in Saint Sophia. . . . Presently, a powerful band was heard, playing a Turkish march; the troops stood to their arms and formed a line; these soldiers, forming a part of the imperial guard, were dressed in white trousers and red jackets, and wore the fez. The officers mounted superb horses. The Sultan, arrived from his summer palace, directed his course towards Saint Sophia. Now come the Grand Vizier, the Seraskier, the Capitan Pasha, and the other ministers, all clad in the straight frock-coat of the Reform, but so covered with gold embroidery that it required a sharp eye to detect any feature of European costume; although, on the other hand, the tarbouch was not sufficient to Orientalize it. They were surrounded by groups of officers, secretaries, and other subordinates, superbly dressed, and also mounted upon magnificent horses. Then came pashas, beys of provinces, aghas, selictars, and other officials, composing the four *odas* of the Selamlık, whose functions are, this one to un-boot the Sultan, that to hold his stirrup, and the other to hand him the napkin; and finally, the Chief of the Pages, and a host of inferiors of the household of the Padishah.

“Next advanced a detachment of the body-guard, selected for their superb appearance, wearing tunics of velvet, embroidered with gold of amazing richness; trousers of white silk, and caps shaped like an inverted mortar, surmounted by immense plumes of peacock’s feathers, two or three feet in height. They are armed with curved sabres, suspended from a broad belt of the richest gold embroidery, and large gilded and damascened halberds, the blades of which are formed into those grotesque and ferocious looking shapes characteristic of the ancient Asiatic weapons.

“To these succeeded some half-dozen superb horses, — barbs or Arabians, — led by the hand, and caparisoned with housings and head-stalls of inconceivable richness. These housings, embroidered with gold and starred with precious stones, were also enriched by the imperial cipher, the complications and interlacings of which compose an elegant arabesque. The luxury

of these caparisons takes, with the Turks, the place which with us is conceded to the ornamentation of our carriages ; although now not a few of the Pashas import carriages from Paris or Vienna. These horses immediately preceded the Sultan, who was mounted upon another noble beast ; whose housings glowed with rubies, topazes, pearls, emeralds, and other precious stones, forming the flowers of a mass of golden foliage.

“ Behind the Sultan marched the chiefs of the black and white eunuchs ; then a corpulent dwarf, with a ferocious visage, dressed like a pasha, and answering to the jesters of the middle ages. This little dwarf was stuck on top of a gigantic horse which his short legs could hardly bestride. The eunuchs now wear the fez and frock-coat, but they have that peculiar aspect which at once identifies them to the observer. The chiefs of the eunuchs are hideous enough. He of the white eunuchs has a face covered with unwholesome fat and furrowed with livid folds ; his two dead eyes shining from out a surface of parchment, and his nerveless hanging lip, give him the air of an ill-tempered old woman. These monsters are, nevertheless, most important and powerful personages. The revenues of Mecca and Medina are appropriated to them. They are immensely rich, and make foul or fair weather at pleasure in the Seraglio ; though their sway is less than formerly. Nevertheless, they govern despotically the throngs of houris whose beauty is never profaned by human eyes ; and they are the centre of countless intrigues.

“ A platoon of body-guards closed the line of march. This brilliant cortège, less varied than formerly, is still strikingly gorgeous and original. It disappeared on its way to Saint Sophia, and after an hour returned in the same order.

“ Meantime we had secured a place in close proximity to the kiosk, before which the foot-kissing was to be performed. The Sultan, on his return, entered the kiosk for a slight collation ; meantime the attendants spread on the ground, before the entrance to the kiosk, a strip of black cashmere, on which they placed a throne ; before this a footstool was fixed, and it, as well as the throne, was ornamented with gold of Byzantine work.



“When Abdul-Medjid re-appeared, a genuine enthusiasm pervaded the whole crowd, Turk or European. The Sultan remained standing a few minutes, and could be plainly scanned from head to foot. In his fez, a clasp of diamonds secured the plume of heron’s feathers, which is the sign of supreme power ; a sort of surtout of dark blue, fastened by a buckle of brilliants, partially concealed the embroidery of his superb uniform ; and these, with white satin trousers, polished leather boots, and exquisitely fitting straw-coloured gloves, formed a dress which in its simplicity outshone the gorgeous costumes of the subordinate personages around him.

“Presently the Sultan seated himself, and the ceremony began. . . . His eyes I can compare to nothing but suns of black, fixed in a sky of diamond. No object seems to reflect itself in them. One would suppose them the eyes of an ecstatic, absorbed by some vision not apparent to the vulgar gaze. His physiognomy is not sombre, nor terrible, nor cruel, but simply extra-human. One felt that this young man, seated like a deity upon a golden throne, had nothing more to desire in this world ; that all the most golden dreams of humanity were, to him, but worn out and insipid realities ; and that he was gradually freezing out of the reach of the warm sympathies of our nature, in the frigid atmosphere of such utter solitude. In fact, that, from the height of his grandeur, he looked down upon the earth, as upon a vague mist, from amid which the heads of the most elevated alone were visible ; and even those beneath his feet !

“Only the highest dignitaries of the Mussulman Empire have the right to kiss the feet of the glorious Sultan. This surpassing honour is reserved for the Vizier, the ministers, and a few privileged pashas. The Vizier started from the angle of the kiosk at the right of the Sultan, and described a semi-circle within the line of guards and musicians, and, in front of the throne, advanced to the footstool after performing the Oriental salutation ; and there, bending over the feet of his master, kissed his boot, as reverentially as a fervent Catholic could kiss the toe of the Pope. This done, he retired backward, and

gave place to another. This was repeated by seven or eight of the foremost personages of the empire.

“During these adorations the countenance of the Sultan remained impassive and expressionless. His fixed dark eyes looked without seeing; no movement of muscle, no play of countenance, nothing to indicate that he observed what was passing. The superb Padishah could not see, across the vast space which separated him from humanity, the humble worms that crawled in the dust at his feet. And yet his immobility had nothing offensive in it, or overstrained; it was merely the drowsy indifference of the deity fatigued by the adoration of his devotees, themselves too happy in being permitted to adore him.

“Next came the Sheik-ul-Islam, in his white caftan and turban of the same colour, crossed in front by a band of gold. He is the Mahometan Patriarch, next to the Sultan in the religious scale, exceedingly powerful and greatly revered. When after the salutation he was about to kiss the Sultan’s foot, Abdul-Mejid broke his calm imperturbability, and, raising the Sheik graciously, prevented the actual performance of the homage.

“The Ulemas then defiled before the Sultan, and were content with touching their lips to the hem of his surtout, not being sufficiently important to aspire to the greater honour. To the Ulemas lesser officials succeeded who could kiss neither the foot nor the robe; to them an end of the Sultan’s sash, held by a pasha, offered its fringe of gold to be kissed, at the extremity of the divan. They came, holding one hand on the forehead and the other on the heart, bent to the earth, touched the scarf and passed on, while the dwarf, from behind the throne, watched the whole with the malicious grimace of an evil-disposed gnome. During all this time the band played, the cannon thundered in the distance, and the pigeons, frightened from the eaves of the mosque of Sultan Bayezid, flew in hurried circles above the gardens of the Seraglio. When the last functionary had paid his homage, the Sultan retired to the kiosk, amid tumultuous *vivas*; and we returned to Pera, to seek the breakfast of which by this time we stood cruelly in need.”

After a reign of twenty-two years, Abdul Medjid died in his bed, June 25, 1861. Under his rule there was greater safety both for life and property than before. His subjects loved him, not so much for what he accomplished as for his benevolence. He was so averse to shedding blood that he would not knowingly decree an execution; but his signature to death warrants was sometimes obtained by subterfuge. Perhaps his greatest distinction is that he committed no murders when he became Sultan, and was permitted to end his life without violence.

## CHAPTER IX.

SULTANS ABDUL AZIZ, MURAD V., AND ABDUL HAMID II.

1861-1895.

ABDUL AZIZ, who now became Sultan, had been most liberally and kindly treated by his brother, Abdul Medjid, and his life as heir-apparent had been in delightful contrast to that of the princes of former reigns. He had enjoyed perfect freedom and a liberal income, while Abdul Medjid had been genuinely fond of his brother, and never indulged his own taste in objects of value without offering their equivalent to the prince.

Abdul Aziz was strong physically, and, while rather ordinary in appearance, had large, impressive eyes. His beard was somewhat gray while he was still young, and his expression was frank, with a certain inexplicable shadow at times, probably arising from the *merak*, or aberration of mind, to which he was subject. He was prodigal, and towards the end of his life became sensual and voluptuous, even beyond the habits of the Turks. He also grew violent and suspicious, and at length was so morose as to be almost insane. He suspected everybody of evil designs, and at times would eat nothing but hard-boiled eggs, lest he should be poisoned.

He constantly built palaces — all ugly in the extreme — because a prophecy had been made that he would die when he ceased to build. It might better have said that he would cease to build when he died. For this fad and other peculiar fancies he required large sums of money, and these he would have. He went into such fits of passion as are

unimaginable if his ministers even cautioned him against his extravagance, much more if they refused him money.

He imported lions and tigers from Africa and India, and parrots without limit. These beasts and birds in cages were all about his palace. He had an equal number of European carriages and pianos; some of the latter were played when strapped on men's backs. One wonders at his ingenuity in devising wants as well as at his skill in gratifying them.

He delighted in cock-fighting, and decorated the winning cocks, while he condemned the others to perfectly dark coops. When in good humour he often joined in a wrestling-match with his ministers and favourites. He usually contended with Nevrez Pasha, who was very corpulent. Of course he was always beaten, and fell in most ludicrous attitudes; but was accustomed to say that each kick of the Sultan's foot was worth to him a decoration or some added honour in his rank.

At times the Sultan's incipient madness took the form of fear of fire. He would then have nothing near him that was made of wood, and used a single candle set in a pail of water as his light at night. He stripped several palaces of all inflammable objects, and replaced them with articles made of metals. The stores of fuel were thrown into the Bosphorus. He also bought the houses near the Seraglio, and had them pulled down as quickly as possible. Many of the beautiful objects from the palace were secured by the wealthy; but the poor people greatly regretted the destruction of much that had been wasted, while they were in dire need of fuel and many useful articles. This Sultan was largely controlled by superstition, and committed numerous follies under its influence. On one occasion he commanded a rare and magnificent antique vase to be thrown into the Bosphorus, because he thought that it had been handled by a consumptive person.



When these attacks were on him, no one could influence him except his mother, who was devoid of sense and judgment, and perceived neither the faults nor the dangers into which they were liable to plunge him.

Naturally there were many intrigues in his court and capital, and a wise man could see at an early period of his reign that the time would come when his whims and his extravagances would not be endured. It is difficult for the Western mind to fully grasp the peculiar position of the Ottoman Sultan. We read of those in past centuries very much as we read of Aladdin's Lamp or the Forty Thieves; but when we try to fit such an anomaly into the life of the nineteenth century it seems an impossible conception.

He is an absolute sovereign and a spiritual head of his people, whose authority is supposed to extend even to a future world; and yet he fears to disregard established customs or disobey his ministers, guards, and courtiers, who kiss his feet at Bairam, and make a constant show of humility, while they plot against his authority and his life.

Sole master of hundreds of beautiful women, his children are born of slaves; and slaves these mothers must remain, no matter how deep an affection he may cherish for them. Moslems at a distance pray for him. Those near him plot against him, while his Christian subjects fear, despise, and ridicule him. Having the semblance of superior power, he is in fact powerless and wretched, for he cannot forget that many of his ancestors have been murdered while on the throne.

“Placed between Europe and Asia, he belongs to neither. Adored as a god by so many different creeds and races, he ends by being deceived, blinded, watched, and tormented, until a life of perpetual danger among his nearest relatives too often ends by voluntary resignation or assassination.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Frances Elliot.

Let us now in justice speak of the youthful virtues of Abdul Aziz, and of the good services which he rendered his country; for happily — black as his portrait must be painted as a whole — he was not entirely bad from the beginning. He was a bigot, and when he was in retirement in the kiosk of Beicos, he was well spoken of by all sorts of men. At that time too he had but one wife; and when the Valideh Sultana presented him with a beautiful slave at Bairam according to custom, he gave her to his wife to serve in the harem.

In the beginning of his reign he was energetic, and inaugurated Councils of State, which met at the Seraskier Tower at midnight. Its illumination assured the people that the Commander of the Faithful was intent upon affairs in which they were concerned. He provided free schools for Moslem children near each mosque; and even the children of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews were instructed at his expense. He made untiring efforts to improve the footing of his army. He built railroads, and purchased a fine fleet of ironclads. All these improvements doubtless inured to the advantage of Turkey, although she had not the money to pay for them. Perhaps the shrewdness of Aziz and his ministers in effecting so much, despite their poverty, may be esteemed an accomplishment.

We can scarcely forgive Abdul Aziz for his innovation in permitting the people to abandon caftan and turban to adopt the European coat and the simple fez. We have seen that Abdul Medjid and his chief officers wore the frock coat and fez at the Bairam; but it was in the time of his successor that the people gradually adopted the new costume by which the picturesqueness of the street scenes and out-of-door life of Constantinople has been lost.

Naturally the women followed the example of the men, and changed their costume. They retained the thinnest of white veils, which are intensely becoming, modifying as

they do the artificial means for beautifying the eyes and complexion, which, seen through the veils, are brilliant and fascinating. The *ferejeh* and *yashmak* which were so attractive to foreign eyes in the old days, were replaced by modern cloaks. These innovations extended to other matters also. Caiques were largely replaced by carriages, and my later visits to Constantinople have been disturbed by constant regrets at the loss of the beautiful, picturesque costumes and scenes of other days, — when ladies were borne in sedan chairs inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl; when the Bedouins in white mantles, Turks in gaily coloured caftans and turbans, Persians with pyramids of astrakhan fur on their heads, Tartars dressed in sheepskins, and numerous other curiously clad men were seen in contrast to Sisters of Charity in their usual dress, Greek women with their red caps and the hair falling on the shoulders, the negress wrapped in Oriental shawls, and the Maltese in her black *faldetta*; while if the Turkish ladies rode they had no coupés, but used Turkish carriages painted with birds and flowers, which were each preceded by a eunuch on horseback. These carriages, having canopy tops open at the sides, disclosed the delicate tints of the *ferejehs* in exquisite contrast with the snowy whiteness of the veils. In those days the streets of Constantinople, and especially the bridge, afforded a wonderfully fascinating panorama to Western eyes; and on Fridays the Golden Horn was gay beyond expression, with the caiques full of ladies, never a man to be seen in the same boats, — save the rowers, — all on their way to the Sweet Waters of Europe for their Sunday afternoon outing.

The innovations of the Sultan Aziz doubtless gave a new zest to life in Constantinople, especially to the women, by affording them new topics for conversation. The Moslems believe that women have no souls; and other people fancy that Moslem women are shut away in harems,

and have little or no influence. This is an error. They are a power in this capital socially, politically, and in matters religious. Fortunately for the party known as "Young Turkey," it had the approval of the gentler sex.

The Sultana Valideh disapproved of the changes going on around her, but she was almost alone in her views; and even when the Sultan decided on his journey to England and different parts of Europe, — a thing that no previous Sultan had done, — taking his nephews Murad and Hamid with him, his mother was the only person who objected, and to pacify her he promised to return in a month.

He departed amid a general expression of enthusiastic approbation, and was attended as far as the Dardanelles by the most distinguished men of Constantinople.

July 24, 1867, was a red-letter day at Constantinople. Abdul Aziz then came home by the way of the Danube, the Black Sea, and the Bosphorus. That fascinating country which borders these straits was never lovelier, and in the clear air beneath the summer sun the brilliant gardens, the deep green fields, the nestling villages with kiosks, mosques, and minarets, seemed to speak a welcome to the Sultan which was emphasized by salvoes of cannon and continual shouts of "‘Padishah hin! chock Yasha!’ the ‘evoe’ of the Greeks, the ‘evviva’ of the Italians, and the ‘hurrah’ of the British sailors." For as the royal yacht passed the summer residence of the foreign ambassadors, the steam yachts belonging to them joined in firing a welcome; and the "Sultanie" stopped to permit the Sultan to receive the Valideh Sultana and her attendants, who had come out to meet him.

His Grand Vizier and other officials were anxious to learn the effect made on the mind of Aziz by all that he had seen. He had gone away full of approbation for everything European, and they feared that he would return with a determination to revolutionize their capital by the



introduction of still other European customs. But his first remark relieved their anxieties, when he declared that he thanked Allah that he was not so blind as the Christian sovereigns whom he had seen. He assured them that he had visited no city that could be compared with Constantinople in natural beauty, though he was obliged to acknowledge that many were better built.

He continued to enumerate things that he had disapproved until his hearers were quite satisfied that he was not Europeanized, and added that the restlessness of the life he had witnessed was an agony to him. He declared that politics, commerce, arts, and, above all, money-making, so engrossed the men of the West that they had no time to consider the spiritual side of life.

He expressed his intense disgust at the manners of women in society, at the shameless way in which they smiled on men, danced with them, and seemed to ignore the presence of their husbands. When he spoke of the ugliness of these ladies, he had no words sufficiently strong to express his opinion, and ended by declaring that the empresses of France and Austria were the only beauties he had seen.

The Grand Vizier was greatly disappointed. He had hoped to hear of new ideas, reforms, and inventions rather than of balls and the manners of women. Then too a revolution in Crete was pending, and the Sultan asked no questions concerning State affairs. He only talked on of the beauty of the Empress Eugénie, and swore that he would find a more beautiful than she among the Circassians.

When opposite the Palace of Dolmabatchke, the royal caïque shot out to the steamer. How beautiful and fairy-like it was, all white, bordered with rose colour and gold, while the twelve rowers in white silk costumes daintily handled their gold-tipped oars! A divan in the stern,





*Dolmabatchke Palace and Mosque of Sultan Abdul  
Medjid.*





shaded by a dome of crimson velvet, supported by small gilt pillars, afforded a luxurious place for Abdul Aziz; while an Arab, in a splendid costume of scarlet and gold, was at the helm, and a gilt eagle with outspread wings ornamented the poop. Surely all he had seen in Europe had not exceeded this gala boat in delicate luxury and beauty.

But to what an ugly palace had he come, — a tasteless, confused mass of half a dozen styles of architecture, impressive only by its size and the beauty of its position on the European shore of the Bosphorus. How the Sultan was at once surrounded by the great officials of the empire, while the Sheik-ul-Islam extended his hands above the returning wanderer in benediction!

Nine years elapsed before Abdul Aziz ceased to reign, — years wasted in a luxurious idleness that conferred no benefits upon his ever-declining empire, while his boundless extravagance plunged it deeper and deeper in debt until its credit was ruined.

Meantime Abdul Aziz dreamed of the perfectly beautiful woman he was seeking, and collected lovely slaves in great numbers from all possible places. At length it chanced that as the Sultan was walking in the fields bordering the Bosphorus, he came upon two slaves of his Sultana, who, safely hidden, as they thought, by the shade of the wood and the twilight, had cast aside their veils. One of these, Mihri Hanoum, was exquisitely lovely, and was at this moment avowing to her companion her hopeless affection for the Sultan.

Abdul Aziz retired to a kiosk near by, and soon heard a sweet young voice singing to a circle of Sultanas. Suspecting and hoping that the singer and the lovely girl he had seen were the same, he sent to ask that she would come to sing to him. Filled with alarm when the eunuch led her away from her friends, Mihri arrived at the kiosk



trembling and faint, and when she tried to sing she burst into a passion of tears. But the Sultan cast on her a look which gave her courage, and she sang as she had never sung before. She was rewarded with a magnificent ring from the finger of her master; and that night, when Mihri was missing from her accustomed place, the eunuch said, "Fear not, the khanoum is with the Sultan." From this day Mihri was more and more adored. Vast sums were lavished on her. A palace was built to please her at an enormous expense; and finally, in the dark hours of this Sultan's last years, she was his constant comforter, until at last she unwittingly gave him the scissors that served to sever the arteries from which his life flowed out.

It was a proud day for Abdul Aziz when the beautiful Eugénie paid him a visit. Never before had such an honour been conferred on an Eastern ruler, and the preparations for her reception were magnificent beyond description. The Palace of Beylerbey was set apart for her use, and her apartments there were an exact reproduction of those which she occupied at the Tuileries.

All along the archipelago of the Sea of Marmora and up the Bosphorus the steamer of the empress was attended by a squadron of steamers, each one carrying the tricolour studded with imperial bees. Salvos of artillery thundered and rolled away among the hills. Bands of music played national airs; and opposite the landing to Beylerbey, the exquisite caique of the Sultan was rowed alongside "L'Aigle," and Abdul Aziz, in the dress of a French marshal, passed to the deck, where the empress, in a beautiful costume, all white, received him with her inimitable grace.

He conducted her to his caique amid the enthusiasm of the people, while the bands played "Partant pour la Syrie." Within the palace all the foreign ambassadors

and the important officials of Turkey were gathered to welcome the empress, who, seated on the throne, received honours never before paid to any woman by an Ottoman Sultan. Visits of ceremony were then in order; and those to the Sultana Valideh and to the "one wife" of the earlier days of the Sultan being over, he was free to present the beautiful Eugénie to the lovely Mihri, who was ever more and more beloved by Abdul Aziz. On this occasion Mihri wore emeralds and pearls valued at more than a million dollars; and the French empress walked through an avenue of Mihri's slaves, many of them glittering with rare jewels.

A supper was prepared with all possible care, and one table was spread according to French customs, while a second was *à la Turque*. The empress chose the latter, and was seated beside Mihri, before an immense plateau of chiselled silver furnished with enamelled plates set with gems.

As these two ladies could only speak through an interpreter, the singing and dancing of the slaves made a fortunate diversion; and when the Sultan at length arrived, he was more than gratified at finding the empress and Mihri on such excellent terms, and soon after announced to the whole assembly that his imperial guest had done him the honour to say that she much admired the Turkish ladies, whose eyes were more brilliant than their jewels. When all the ceremonies of the evening were over, the Sultan attended the empress to her caïque, well pleased to find that Mihri's loveliness was not dimmed by close contrast with the exquisite beauty of the French empress.

Despicable as he was, we can but pity this Sultan when, for four years, he shut himself away from active life, and was only seen by his subjects on Fridays, as he passed to the mosque of Abdul Medjid, close to the Dolmabatchke Palace, which he never left for any other of the many

palaces which were at his command. He was eaten up with suspicions of his ministers, of the party of Young Turkey, and of all who approached him.

We cannot here give the details of the growing discontent which culminated in the deposition of Abdul Aziz, nor of the cruel circumstances attending it. He was taken first to the Old Seraglio, where he was followed by his mother, the Sultana Mihri, and the harem. This disused palace proved so uncomfortable that he begged to be removed to the Palace of Cheragan, on the Bosphorus, and again he demanded to be taken to the Palace of Beylerbey, on the Asiatic shore, both of which requests were quickly and cheerfully granted; but no change of place could dispel the sadness of Abdul Aziz, and to this was added an insomnia that could not be overcome. He ate almost nothing, and moved about continually. Mihri never left him, and his mother was much with him. When he entered his palace prison, he had written on the dust upon the table the following lines: —

“Man’s destiny is Allah’s will,  
Sceptres and power are His alone;  
My fate is written on my brow,  
Lowly I bend before His Throne.”

On the first Sunday in June, 1876, he expressed a wish to be left alone that he might try to sleep. The Sultana Mihri consented to this unwillingly; and as she left the room the Sultan asked her to send him a hand glass and scissors, that he might trim his beard. These being sent, he locked the door communicating with the harem; and when, some time after, the guard — who was in the room, but so placed that he saw the back of the Sultan only — gave the alarm, it was found that he had cut the arteries in his arms, wrists, and feet, and was already dead.

Various theories of murder have been advanced by the Turks, but there are strong proofs of suicide. Ten

days later Mihri also died in giving birth to a second prince.

Abdul Aziz is buried in the tomb of Mahmoud II., his renowned father, of which we have already spoken; the Sultana Mihri at Veni Djami, the cemetery of Ayoob. It was a long way from Cheragan, where she died, but a numerous procession attended her poor body to its last home. Pashas, beys, eunuchs, and aghas bore the inlaid coffin by turns. Over it a rich shawl was thrown, on which were laid garlands of fresh roses. Mollahs led the procession, reciting verses from the Koran.

The brother of Mihri, Tcherkess Hassan, who had been made an aide-de-camp to Abdul Aziz by his sister's influence, was the most unusual and noticeable figure at this funeral. His passionate grief attracted general attention. His was the last hand that rested on the coffin before it was lowered into the grave, and he seemed there to be dedicating himself to some service for her sake. When the earth was scattered by handfuls on the coffin, he was so overcome by his emotions that he supported himself against a tree. It was doubtless at this time that he resolved on the deeds he later performed.

In a country like Turkey it is not strange that the patience of the ministers of Abdul Aziz was exhausted, and they prepared for any severity that might be necessary to free themselves from his rule, after all his deafness to their advice, and his blindness to what was occurring under his eyes. He refused to listen to any caution, pursued his course of ruinous extravagance, dismissed the ministers who displeased him, and put himself under the sole care of Mahmoud, his sister's husband, who basely flattered and deceived him. Finally he shut himself away from his people for four years, and was only seen as he passed from the Dolmabatchke to the mosque of Sultan Medjid near at hand.



It seemed to be time for a conspiracy; and when one Friday the Sultan did not appear to go to mosque, the people armed themselves and went to the palace, demanding to speak with him. Mihri's brother Hassan was sent to ask the wishes of the crowd. They replied that they required the dismissal of the Grand Vizier Mahmoud and of the Scherif-ul-Islam. Abdul Aziz granted this request at once, and promised that a firman should immediately be sent to the Seraskier Tower. The people gladly departed, shouting praises of the Padishah.

This act caused great dissatisfaction in the harem, where Mahmoud was a favourite with the Valideh Sultana. A council of new ministers was summoned, and they found the Sultan in bad humour. He was greatly changed, having become enormously fat and heavy. His good looks were gone, his hair and beard were white, and he had a painfully contemptuous expression on his sallow face.

At first he paid no attention to the new ministers, and after repeated salutations, they stood in a circle about him until chairs were brought, and they sat on the edges of them in anxious expectation of a sign from the Sultan, who seemed quite lost in a large stuffed arm-chair, and constantly twisted the amber beads of a prayer chaplet.

At length he asked some questions concerning the army, the finances, and other matters, and ended with a demand for money. When told of the suffering of the wounded and starving soldiers, and the need of devoting every dollar that could be obtained to them, he replied that these were miserable pretexts; and when he was informed that twenty thousand Mussulmans were preparing for a revolution unless their demands were complied with, and the friends of Mahmoud Pasha dismissed from office, he



became livid with rage, and declared that *not one* should be removed, and, raising his voice, he repeated, "Not one, not one;" and after a few more questions and answers, he called them all traitors, and, pointing to the door, commanded them to leave.

According to Ottoman law, when a Sultan is incapable of ruling, the Sheik-ul-Islam decides what is to be done; and being now appealed to, that authority decided that a Sultan who was not a father to his people should be dethroned. We know the rest, and what was the fate of Abdul Aziz.

The choice of those in authority fell on Murad Effendi for their next Padishah. He was one of the nephews of the Sultan, who had accompanied him to Europe, and was now living in an ugly kiosk above Scutari, shut off from all outside life, and even forbidden to mention politics. On the afternoon of the day on which the important decision of the Sheik-ul-Islam was made, a *tailor* asked to be admitted to show some samples to the prince. When he entered his presence, Murad at once saw that the man was a friend in disguise. He was able, however, to command his surprise; and when he saw that there was a paper concealed among the samples, he stepped to the window for a better light, and read these startling words, "To-morrow you will be Sultan. Signed Mehemet Ruchti, Grand Vizier."

The young prince almost fainted; but making a sign to his favourite servant, he contrived to be left alone with his tailor, who told him all that was happening in Constantinople.

In the city there were no outward signs of the great tragedy about to be enacted. Everything appeared to be quiet and tranquil, and Abdul Aziz was meditating on the best method by which he could revenge himself for the insults that had been offered him.

With perfect secrecy the great ironclads were prepared to sail, and the Commander of the Royal Guard, known to be devoted to the Sultan, was ordered by the Grand Vizier to embark his men on the transports and sail under sealed orders, to be opened when twenty miles at sea.

In the Council at the Seraskierate, Midhat Pasha said,—

“Prompt measures may prevent bloodshed. We must be resolute and swift. Listen, the muezzin sounds the call to evening prayer. Before he announces the break of day, Abdul Aziz must cease to reign.”

While the Sultan was being conveyed to his prison, Murad was released from his long confinement, and conveyed to the Seraskierate; and in the rosy dawn of May 30, 1876, a hundred cannon announced that a new Sultan reigned at Constantinople. Flags waved from the tower of Galata and the official residences; the ships in the harbour were gaily dressed; carriages with ambassadors and ladies of rank were passing through the narrow streets, and men on horseback were everywhere, while the bridge of Galata was filled with a mass of humanity.

Later in the day the streets leading from the Seraskierate to Dolmabatchke were lined with soldiers, and the cannon announced that the new Sultan was on his way to the palace. In the State carriage, drawn by four English horses, Murad sat alone. He wore a dark uniform with the order of the Medjidié upon his breast. He had lost the apathetic dejection of the day before, and with an animated expression on his handsome face, this young Sultan of thirty-six years bowed to right and left, in acknowledgment of his praises which were being shouted amid the din of the discordant Turkish bands.

As Murad reached the Dolmabatchke, Hassan the Circassian respectfully handed him a letter. Murad knew

that it was from Abdul Aziz, and mastered his emotion with difficulty.

The events of forty-eight hours had made an impression on Murad which could not easily be thrown off, and the deaths of his uncle and the Sultana Mihri soon after threw a sadness over all the relatives of Abdul Aziz, no matter what their opinion of him had been. But the effects of these circumstances would soon have passed, and the young Sultan's mind been occupied with his important duties, had not other terrible tragedies quickly succeeded them.

The well-known devotion of Hassan to Abdul Aziz, and the vast difference which his fall and death made to the Circassian, aroused a fear of him in the minds of the Minister of War and other officials. Hassan was offered an honourable position at Bagdad, which he refused to accept. This so strengthened the suspicions of his loyalty that he was arrested, but was soon released on parole, and was about to leave Constantinople.

His first act was to visit the country-house of the Minister of War; and finding that his Excellency was attending a council at the house of Midhat Pasha, Hassan also went there. Eight ministers were assembled on the first floor, while their officers and servants were below, drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes.

Hassan entered and sat down with the rest, saying that he wished to see one of the councillors. After a time he stole upstairs and found an Agha whom he knew, on duty; and shortly after, this guard having descended the stairs on an errand, Hassan pulled the curtain aside and looked in upon the ministers. In a moment he rushed in and shot the Minister of War with his pistol; but seeing that he had not killed him, the Circassian attacked him as he lay on the floor. Having satisfied himself that this enemy was dead, Hassan raged like a wild beast, and, after kill-

ing other ministers, two aids, and a police-officer, he was overpowered, and was hanged next day to a tree in the square before the Seraskierate.

These horrors so affected the mind of the Sultan Murad that he lost his reason, and it was soon apparent that he must be retired. A difficulty arose when his brother, Abdul Hamid, objected to being made Sultan. At length, however, when he was convinced of the hopeless insanity of Murad, he consented to take his place, and on August 31 the cannon again announced the installation of a new Sultan.

On the next day, Friday, Abdul Hamid rode in state from Dolmabatchke to S. Sophia, and after the service in the mosque he proceeded to the sanctuary of the old Seraglio, and there, where the mantle of the Prophet is deposited, he was acknowledged as Sultan by the Sheik-ul-Islam and the ministers. Seated on the Golden Throne, surrounded by the highest officials of the capital, he listened to the chant of proclamation.

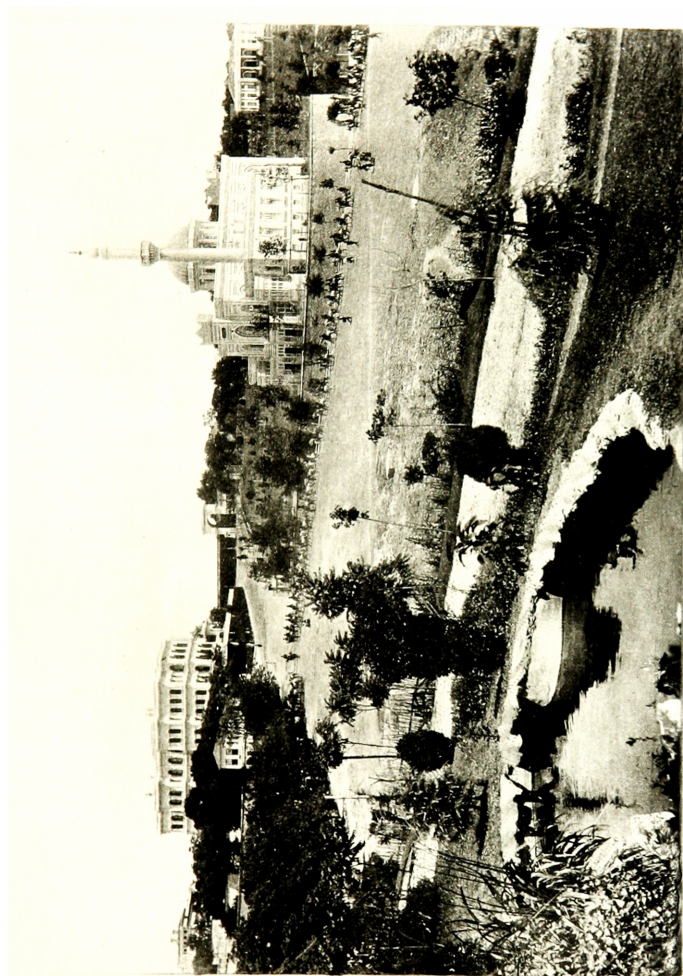
On that day too the insane Murad was removed to Cheragan, where it is said that he remained as recently as 1893; but no one seems to be absolutely sure of this. All has been mystery concerning him; and if he has died, the place of his burial is not known.

Curiously enough, the kiosk in which Abdul Hamid chooses to dwell, at Yildiz, is very near the palace where Murad is enclosed, if he still lives. Yildiz is three miles from the city, on the Bosphorus; and as the Sultan goes to the mosque near the *palazzetto*, there is no longer a spectacle of the Selanelik in Constantinople. It can, however, be seen by applying for an order at one of the embassies; and visitors are well accommodated in a building devoted to the comfort of guests, from the windows of which a full view is had of the procession which attends the Sultan both when entering and leaving the mosque. Abdul





*Yıldız Kiosk, with Mosque and Pavilion.*





Hamid has thus abandoned S. Sophia and all the other principal mosques of Constantinople.

The small house at Yildiz, where Hamid is content to live, was formerly but a retreat for a summer afternoon. Hamid, however, does not require a large harem. Each year he receives the customary tribute of beautiful slaves, and leaves them to the care of his mother to be educated and married.

The park surrounding Yildiz is very fine, and the views over the Bosphorus to the hills of Asia are extensive and lovely. Here the Commander of the Faithful received the German emperor, taking the position of the Prophet, and demanding that the Mountain should come to him with more success than attended the efforts of Mohammed himself. He met the emperor and empress at the landing-place, and led them up the hill to the house that was set apart for them. He did not accompany his imperial guests to any spot outside of Yildiz. He supplied them with every luxurious means of making their excursions, but did not deviate from the daily routine of his life.

Abdul Hamid habitually eats alone, his table being placed before a window, from which he has an extensive view of land and water. His food is principally vegetables, which are brought to him in silver saucepans and presented to him sealed. He drinks water which is carried to Yildiz in casks, and transported with great caution, that nothing may be dropped into it. When it is incumbent on him to entertain distinguished visitors at his table, Abdul Hamid receives royal guests or ambassadors and their wives with a most distinguished bearing and true courtesy. He bestows splendid gifts of gems and pearls on European ladies, and keeps a quantity in store for this purpose.

One reform under the reign of Abdul Hamid has afforded much happiness to his female relatives, as he

murders no possible heirs to his throne, and his nephews live in security.

He rises early and works hard all day, and not infrequently far into the night. He drives or rows for a while in the afternoon, and later receives ambassadors or presides at councils. He wishes to see everything with his own eyes, and is too essentially a Turk to be progressive. He has no sympathy with "Young Turkey," and is determined to be the master of his empire. But all this does not make him well nor happy. He is the palest, thinnest, saddest looking little man that one can conceive of, and it is not strange that he is more fond of his physician than of others, for he must have great need of him.

We perceive that nothing of importance can occur in the Ottoman Empire without the knowledge of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. What are we then to think of him when by general consent it is admitted that his government is of the very worst? Even the glimmers of light that had dawned upon Ottoman darkness before his accession have been extinguished. Fortunately during his reign his territory has been much lessened, and some of the countries which have been emancipated from Turkish rule are now far in advance of the "Sick Man" they have left in all that is conveyed by the expression "Christian civilization." The Turkish territory in Europe formerly comprised two hundred and thirty thousand square miles, with a population of nearly twenty millions. It is now but sixty-six thousand miles, with a population of but four and a half millions.

The reign of Abdul Hamid II. has been especially prolific of persecutions of the Armenians. This nation seems to have been doomed to suffer at the hands of its conquerors; and such has been its terrible experience that the wonder is that anything which merits the name of an Armenian nation still exists.



But what can be said of a sovereign under whose rule it is possible for such massacres to occur at the close of the nineteenth century as those reported from Bilsit in the year of grace 1894? — a ruler who orders so terrible a vengeance upon a simple people, whose crime has been that in protecting their flocks they had killed a few Kurds who had already robbed them, — a vengeance which sacrifices ten thousand lives, which not only permits a wholesale massacre, but also the many fiendish atrocities which are sure to occur when armies are allowed to pillage and destroy; a vengeance which burns whole villages and leaves their places utterly desolate; a vengeance which cannot be spoken of in detail by reason of its cruel and unspeakable sins? Surely nothing can be more true than the summing up of Freeman's splendid history of the Ottoman Power:—

“The Turk came into Europe as a stranger and an oppressor, and after five hundred years he is a stranger and oppressor still. He has hindered the progress of every land where he has set his foot. He has brought down independent nations to bondage; by bringing them down to bondage he has taught them the vices of bondsmen. He has turned fertile lands into a wilderness, he has turned fenced cities into ruinous heaps, because under his rule no man can dwell in safety. Wherever his rule has spread, the inhabitants have dwindled away, and the land has day by day gone out of cultivation. While other conquerors, even other Mahometan conquerors, have done something for the lands they conquered, the Ottoman Turk has done nothing for the lands which he has conquered; he has done everything against them. His dominion is perhaps the only case in history of a lasting and settled dominion, as distinguished from mere passing inroads, which has been purely evil, without any one redeeming feature. The Saracen in South-western Europe has left behind him the memorials of a cultivation different from that of Europe, but still a real cultivation,

which for a while surpassed the cultivation of most European nations at the same time. But the Turk in Southeastern Europe can show no memorials of cultivation; he can show only memorials of destruction. His history for the five hundred years during which he has been encamped on European soil is best summed up in the proverbial saying, "Where the Sultan's horse-hoof treads, grass never grows again."

## Part Third.

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### THE CONSTANTINOPLÉ OF TO-DAY.

Here, at my window, I at once survey  
The crowded city and resounding sea ;  
In distant views the Asian mountains rise,  
And lose their snowy summits in the skies;  
Above these mountains proud Olympus towers,  
The parliamentary seat of heavenly powers !  
New to the sight, my ravished eyes admire  
Each gilded crescent and each antique spire,  
The marble mosques, beneath whose ample domes  
Fierce, warlike sultans sleep in peaceful tombs ;  
Those lofty structures, once the Christians' boast,  
Their names, their beauty, and their honours lost ;  
Those altars bright, with gold and sculpture graced,  
By barbarous zeal of savage foes defaced ;  
Sophia alone her ancient name retains,  
Though the unbeliever now her shrine profanes ;  
Where holy saints have died in sacred cells,  
Where monarchs prayed, the frantic dervish dwells.  
How art thou fallen, imperial city, low !  
Where are thy hopes of Roman glory now ?

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE CASTLE OF THE SEVEN TOWERS — THE OLD SERAGLIO AND OTHER PALACES.

WHEN a traveller essays to speak of the Constantinople of to-day, he is confronted with the puzzling questions, What am I to say? Where shall I begin? There are few cities that afford so great a variety of things to be done and sights to be seen, and so many ways of doing them.

You may reach the Asiatic shore in a caique, or in one of the innumerable small steamers that cross and recross the Bosphorus. You may ride on the European side upon a horse or donkey, or in any one of a variety of carriages. If you walk, the curious street scenes will quite absorb your attention, and suggest thoughts which are entirely new; and if you have intended to visit some particular spot, you will probably not reach it, but will be turned away from the object you supposed you had, and will devote yourself eagerly to something of which you had not thought, perhaps had not heard before.

And, curiously enough, you will not regret abandoning your well-made plan; in fact, you will think it better to have no plan. It will require but little time for the Oriental lethargy to pervade your being, and convince you that nothing matters; that the thing not done is quite as good as the thing well done; that, in short, you have been mistaken hitherto when you believed, and acted on your belief, that what you did or did not do was of any consequence. And having thus thrown off your Western



unrest and your weighty sense of responsibility, you will be prepared to enjoy Constantinople.

Your eyes will constantly rest upon a variety of human beings that will interest you; but you will not clearly know why, and you will be strangely indifferent to all alike. Neither the Arab, Jew, Turk, Negro, nor Greek will appeal to you on account of race; but you will have an opinion of each one of them according to the picturesque of his appearance, — an opinion that will be favourable or not in an exact ratio to the degree in which he pleases your eye. And this position is entirely defensible. Why should a Christian visit this city of the Turks, with its many objectionable features, except to be amused and to see things that are novel? If there were not this element of the unknown and unexpected in travel, why should we not stay in Boston or London or Paris, where we are far more comfortable?

In speaking of the life of Constantinople, I involuntarily include Scutari and the life of the Asiatic shore with that of the cities on the European side of the Bosphorus. The three — Stamboul, Pera, and Scutari — are essentially one. If you wish to witness the great spectacle of the departure of the pilgrimage to Mecca, you go to Scutari. If you visit the ancient Broussa, you take the train at Scutari; and here is a wonderful City of the Dead, where hundreds of the living may be seen each day enjoying a holiday or picnic party.

You see so few women, — except those of the lowest classes, — and those you do see are so curiously habited, in order that they may not be seen, that they seem to be surrounded by an atmosphere of impenetrable mystery; and this, together with other inexplicable phenomena which you observe, induces a strange sensation of not being quite the same person that you brought with you from the more comprehensible West. You feel that you

are seeing "as through a glass darkly" in an unusual sense, or as if all that you observe were an interminable series of conundrums which you have no hope of guessing. De Amicis well expresses the effect of Constantinople when he says:—

"One impression effaces another, wishes crowd upon you, time hurries by: you would like to stay there all your life; you would like to get away to-morrow. But when the attempt is to be made to describe this chaos!—then comes the temptation to make one bundle of all the books and papers on your table, and throw the whole out of the window."

But a beginning must be made somewhere; and as I have already spoken of approaching Constantinople by the sea, it will be well to say that one may also take the wonderfully fine Orient express from Paris or Vienna, and be set down at the Castle of the Seven Towers, now a railway-station. Let us hope that the noise and dirt and smoke of this modern innovation have released the "earth-bound spirits" of murdered sultans and other wretches, who otherwise should be here. Shades of Constantine, Theodosius, and Mohammed II! brave as you may have been, you must have beat a retreat before this sacrilege, which has broken through the walls of ancient Byzantium, and desecrates the surroundings of your Golden Gate.

On each side of the track the remnants of past glory are scattered, — blocks of marble, bits of porphyry, half-buried arches, in all too close proximity to piles of coke and the débris that attends a carelessly kept railway-terminus. Why must this track have ended just here, where it has destroyed so large a part of the little that remained of ancient Byzantium? And this, we blush to own, was not the work of Moslems, but of Christians, whose only idea was to cut a bee-line for their railway.

Of the seven towers but four remain, and these are in a desperately feeble state. Built by Constantine the Great, strengthened by Theodosius, and again by Mohammed II., these towers are associated with the greatest rulers of Constantinople. Their history is as black as their stones, and one almost shudders at their mention. In the Seven Towers the Turks were accustomed to imprison foreign ambassadors when about to declare war against the countries they represented. Some Venetian ambassadors were imprisoned here as late as 1714, when the war in the Morea broke out. This was in the days when the Turk not only regarded Christians as dogs, but dared to express his opinion in word and deed. Now all that is changed. Doubtless they despise us even more than then; but they observe a certain reticence which is safer for them and more becoming.

The murders and cruelties perpetrated here have given the name of the Seven Towers, *Jedi-Kulé*, a sinister sound, even to the Turks themselves. The entrance is through a small square tower. The guard is usually asleep; but if a coin is slipped into his hand, he is not likely to awake until the visitor has passed within. Around the enclosure thus entered are black, heavy walls, on which are square and round towers of various heights; and many staircases which led to them are now in ruins.

Here is a small mosque, surrounded by rank vegetation and a few trees. Everything is abandoned and falling to pieces. On some of the stones of the walls the monogram of Constantine, Greek crosses, and inscriptions may be traced. Sometimes a whole Greek sentence can be found as it was cut by the soldiers who guarded this fortress before the fall of Constantinople.

One of the remaining towers has so many bloody traditions connected with it that one almost fears to mention

it. Here were the frightful dungeon prisons and the torture-chambers. In a large round apartment the secret decapitations took place, and the heads were thrown into the "Bloody Well." Beneath was the rocky cavern, in which the most horrible tortures were inflicted by the ghastly light of a single lantern hung in the roof. A few years since a mass of human bones, piled nearly as high as the castle platform, could be seen in this inner court, near which, in a smaller enclosure, the decapitations took place at night.

During the period which may be called the Reign of the Janissaries, the Seven Towers was their castle and prison. Seven sultans deposed by them were brought here, and not one of them left this worst of dungeons alive. It was the custom of these soldiers to suspend the heads of illustrious victims from the walls, and at times a goodly number were seen there. At other times these heads were sent to distant provinces, — as Mohammed II. sent that of Constantine, — thus announcing the death of an important official!

In spite of all the horrors that have been enacted here, this prison does not arouse the same sentiments as do the Bastille and the Tower of London, when we remember the long procession of noble men and women who passed their portals but to die. In fact, when we remember that Othman II. amused himself by making targets of his pages to increase his skill as a marksman, we cannot deeply regret that he was tortured in the Hippodrome, and assassinated at the Seven Towers. It must have seemed like a poetic and even an artistic justice to those who had suffered untold cruelties at his hand.

It is curious how the separation of the sexes by the Mohammedans is unconsciously associated with every department of their history. For example, the name of the Seven Towers calls up the thought of horrors con-



nected with men, and the Seraglio — while we know that many masculine tragedies have occurred here — is, in our minds, essentially associated with women.

Seen from the outside, either from the water or the land, the Old Seraglio appears to be a thick grove of lofty, black cypresses, from which rise minarets and domes and curiously shaped roofs, all glistening white. It is the prominent feature of Stamboul, the first and the last to rivet the gaze and the thought of the visitor to this wonderful city of the Golden Horn.

Within the walls of this deserted palace one finds such desolation as is completely disenchanting. The gardens are narrowed by the Orient Railway which pierces their walls; and along the border of the Sea of Marmora the sheds of shipbuilders replace the lovely kiosks which were once dotted here and there, hidden in the shade of luxuriant trees, draped with the delicately scented honeysuckle, and surrounded by thousands of ever-blooming roses.

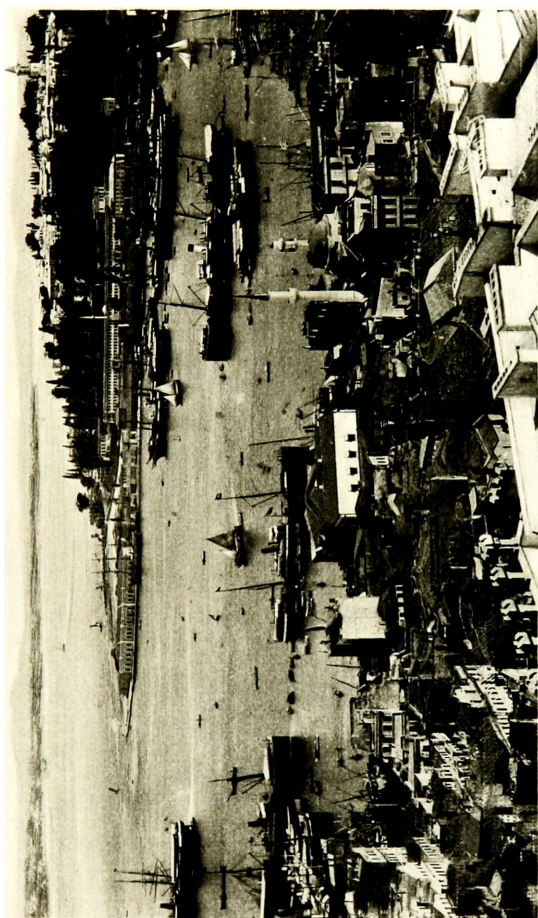
As I to-day re-read the description of the Old Seraglio in the poetic words of De Amicis, which vividly recall what I saw here long decades ago, I turn with deep regret to what is left for me to describe or for the traveller to see; and yet much of interest still exists in the associations with these deserted halls, where every passion of the human heart — ambition, love, hatred, revenge, and tender pity — has existed, and manifested itself in the superlative degree.

Here it was but too true that in the midst of life death revelled in its power. Here the mother of royal kin breathlessly watched the baby that she knew she had not the power to keep, till in some inattentive moment he was snatched away and murdered, lest he should some day aspire to be the ruler of Islam; and the broken-hearted mother had but the poor consolation of laying her baby





*Seraglio Point and Palace.*





away at Ayooob, vainly wondering why she should bear sons only to see them murdered and to bury them. In this Seraglio the lovely maiden of Negropont preferred to suffer death rather than be the love of Mohammed II., and here have laughed and danced a few brief hours thousands of warm, palpitating houris, only to be bowstrung by the hideous mutes, tied in sacks, and shot through the golden-lined (!) funnel that ended in the sea.

Here too, ages ago, the Greek empresses dwelt, — for on this site was the Palatium Sacrum, the palace of Placidia, and that of Mangana, — and wielded the vast power of the Byzantine throne with a cruel tyranny that few sultans have surpassed. And even under the Moslem rule, in spite of the treachery and danger by which they were surrounded, Kourrem and Safiye, Mahpeike and Sekuzula, Retimo and Kadjie, and many others in greater or less degree, have ruled the sultans and the empire.

Their lives were full of intrigue. By means of the eunuchs, they conspired with ambitious Moslems and foreign ambassadors whom they had never seen, to betray the Sultan who had cast them off for the sake of younger and more recent favourites, or in the hope of gaining honours for a son or brother that they could not otherwise command. Doubtless life was tame enough to the greater number of those who lived in the harem of this old palace; but there were always some among them whose days and nights were all too brief in which to invent and execute the schemes suggested by their ruling passion, — let it be love, ambition, or revenge, or that avarice by which the favourite of Ahmed II. accumulated greater treasures than the Sultan's treasury contained. This life no longer exists; and even the Ottoman Padishah must, like other rulers, pay outward deference, at least, to the great, impersonal monarch, public opinion.

The word *seraglio* is often misunderstood and misap-



plied. Its real meaning is the outer portion of any Mohammedan dwelling, whether large or small, — the quarters of the men, — and has the same significance as *selamlık*, in contradistinction to *haremlık*, or women's apartments.

It is almost impossible when thousands of miles away to forget what this palace once was, and speak only of what it now is. But some of the exterior effects of the old days remain; for although neglected, one still sees a vast collection of edifices, quite irregular in form, and evidently intended for widely differing purposes. A pavilion, open, light, and airy, stood beside a high-walled building with latticed windows; not so sombre within as without, for through these open screens those within could see and be themselves unseen. There were mosques whose tall white minarets were softly outlined against the clear blue sky; hospitals too, and kitchens in which the poor were always fed; and dungeons and death-chambers, as well as the "cages" in which the royal princes pined with grief and kept their dissolute feasts by turns.

After the Old Seraglio was abandoned as the Sultan's residence, the harems of deceased sultans were enclosed here for life; and it is said that the wives and slaves of Abdul Medjid, who were thus secluded, set it on fire, hoping to gain more liberty elsewhere. This fire destroyed many rare and valuable objects; and since that time this gem of the Golden Horn has been allowed to run to waste, until it is now an uncared-for garden, through which a railway runs.

Abdul Medjid could not support the weight of its tragic associations. Since the time of Mohammed II., twenty-five sultans of his own family had died or been murdered or imprisoned within this palace, and to him it was full of ghosts.

In the square before the principal gate of the Seraglio

is the exquisite fountain of Ahmed III., which, with that of Tophane, may easily be called the most beautiful of the many fountains in Constantinople that are noticeable for the beauty of their design and ornament. This fountain of Ahmed is so pleasing in its architecture, and so exquisite in its ornamentation, that it presents itself to my imagination whenever fountains are spoken of. Its decoration is in arabesques, and glitters with gold. Its proportions are exquisite, and the ornament inside the deep pagoda roof — all in the delightful tint which dead gold takes on in this climate — is composed of pencillings and traceries. The panels on the sides have roses and stars delicately carved. Here and there are Turkish verses entwined among other designs, and the supporting columns are slender and beautiful. The principal inscription reads, "This fountain speaks to you in the verses of the Sultan Ahmed. Turn the key of this pure and tranquil spring, and invoke the name of God; drink of this inexhaustible and limpid water, and pray for the Sultan!" In short, this fountain is a gem of Orientalism, standing on a platform shaded by tall trees, from which there is an enchanting view of sea and land.

We will enter the Court of the Janissaries by the Bab-i-Houmayoun, or the Sublime Porte, with its four superb columns, above which is the inscription, "May Allah ever preserve the glory of the possessor! may Allah strengthen his foundation!" Just inside this gate were the niches devoted to the heads which had been cut off. Sometimes the bodies were placed there with the head between the feet; and invariably the accusation and the sentence of the Sultan were affixed to these ghastly objects. As recently as the beginning of this century, on one occasion the heads of all the members of the Divan appeared here together; and the Janissaries seized them with savage joy, bore them to the Hippodrome, and ranged them before the

kettles which were so prominent in all that concerned this corps.

The Sublime Porte was guarded by the Janissaries, and fifty porters were required for this service, together with the gardeners of the Seraglio, whose duties seem to have been strangely varied, since they were also charged with that of guarding the Sultan. Each Moslem who passed by this gate was expected to say a prayer for the "Lord of his Age." We query whether the mutterings were not sometimes curses.

The Court of the Janissaries is large, and in it is the church of S. Irene, which now serves as an armoury. It is a venerable edifice, though not the original erected by Constantine, but that which Leo the Isaurian built on the same site. It is shaded by a magnificent plane-tree, and near it are remnants of Greek statues and bas-reliefs, and sarcophagi of ancient aspect. Within are preserved the keys of conquered cities, the weapons of Scanderbeg and Mohammed II., and an enamelled armlet of Tamerlane.

In this court stands that famous tree which requires the arms of ten men to encircle it. Beneath its spreading branches are two small columns which were used for decapitations, and stood as a constant warning before the thousands who passed through this court. Here entered all who attended the Divan, or were on their way to the presence of the Padishah. Here came trains of camels bringing arms to S. Irene, or provisions for the multitude who ate the Sultan's bread, which demanded the services of one hundred and fifty bakers and two hundred cooks.

Around the court are low buildings which served for stables, or magazines, or dwellings for slaves. Here the tax-gatherers brought their burdens of riches into the midst of hundreds of men of all ranks, some of whom

were splendidly, and all picturesquely dressed. The very highest officials of the empire were seen here, as well as the Bulgarian grooms who led the horses that were fed from silver mangers. From century to century all these and many others passed to and fro in this now deserted court of the Janissaries.

Through the Ortu Kapu — Middle Gate — one may now pass at will. It was formerly guarded by double doors, which enclosed a small space that was quite in keeping with the grim purposes for which it was used. Here those who were doomed to death were strangled or stabbed. Above are four apertures where the mute executioners were stationed, and could overlook what occurred below, while they could also communicate with the Divan by a secret passage, and thus receive the orders which they hastily executed.

Another gate — Bab-i-Scadet, the Gate of Felicity — leads into a much larger court, around which are several other portals. This gate opened into the very home of the Commander of the Faithful, and during four centuries was closed against all Christians who did not come in the name of a sovereign or a nation. It cast a spell of terror over all who presented themselves before it, and was the scene of frequent rebellions. Here the Janissaries and other rebels assembled, and demanded the victims that alone could appease their rage. Many a favourite general, eunuch, vizier, or treasurer has been thrust from this portal into the midst of a beastlike crowd that soon ended his misery. From this gate Hafiz, the beloved vizier of Murad IV., went to his death; and here Mohammed III. was forced to salute the soldiers who had murdered his most faithful servants in the presence of the corpses.

Yes, the Sultan was an autocrat; but even he was sometimes brought to bay before the passions of his servants, and could only assuage his grief and pacify his rage with



the reflection that his opportunity for revenge would come. And rarely was he cheated of this joy!

The Hall of the Throne, also called the Green Vaults of Constantine, is entered from this court. The building is not large, but has a beautiful gallery and rich doorway. The interior is decorated with porcelain tiles and marbles on the walls, while the vaulted ceiling has the usual arabesque in gold. In the centre is the basin for a fountain, and the throne of solid gold at one end is like a large bed with a canopy supported by slender columns studded with precious stones. Each column is surmounted by a globe and crescent from which hang horse-tails, as symbols of the military power of the Padishah. The canopy has a fringe of pearls, and many gems are set in various parts of this curious structure, which, being uncut, produce no effect. Involuntarily one remembers that the nineteen heads of the brothers of Mohammed III. were piled around this throne.

Here is a collection of sabres and other weapons, and jewelled armour, literally encrusted with rubies, diamonds, and other precious stones. The housings and stirrups and other horse furniture are equally rich, as well as drinking-cups and other rare vessels of jade, onyx, and crystal. The unique feature of this exhibit is the drawers full of gems, some of which are uncut, and all unset.

Near the throne-room is the hall in which the Holy Standard of the Prophet, with his sabre, staff, and bow, is guarded. Its treasures are displayed to the assembled court but once a year; and it is believed that should the eye of an infidel rest on the Holy Standard, he would be blinded as by lightning. This most sacred object is kept in a *mihrab* rolled in forty coverings of silk; and the Sultan alone can bring it forth.

It is difficult for us to appreciate the adoration of the Mussulmans for this oriflamme. It accompanied the



army only when it was led by the Sultan in person or by the Grand Vizier. When it was returned to the Seraglio, prayers were said, and an incense of aloes and ambergris burned around it during several days.

In 1768, when this *sandjak-cherif* was brought forth, some Europeans were concealed in Moslem houses, where from behind the window-curtains they could watch the procession and behold the sacred banner. Suddenly they were discovered, and an emir cried out: "Here are *ghiaours*, who dare profane the Standard of the Prophet with their unholy gaze. Let these dogs be punished!"

Instantly a crowd of fanatics rushed in and killed every European found there. Ladies were dragged by the hair, kicked, and frightfully abused. The wife and daughters of an imperial ambassador were among the slain. The Grand Vizier announced that the murderers would be punished; but they could not be identified, and no one paid a penalty for these crimes.

Various other halls and buildings open into this court, which were formerly guarded by eunuchs, black and white, but are now abandoned and falling into ruin. Here is the hall which, in its inscriptions and style of architecture, celebrated the victory of Theodosius over the Goths, and depositories for the wardrobes and archives of the State, as well as stables and other less important halls and offices. Each separate edifice is supported by delicately carved columns, which I should describe as fossil lacework, and each of them is surmounted by a dome. All about, in and out of the various courts of the Seraglio, are gardens and passages, which are so confusing to one not familiar with them that the plan of the palace could only be made intelligible by a map showing the relative positions of the principal courts and the edifices surrounding them. The impression on the stranger

is that of interminable labyrinths of gardens, passages, courts, gates, kiosks, and peristyles.

The Hall of the Divan is important, and has not suffered greatly from fire. It occupies an isolated kiosk, — a word, by the way, which is applied to edifices of all sizes, from a small summer-house to a moderately large temple. This hall is large and low, and dimly lighted by small moresque windows. It is lined with occasional porcelain panels and marble, on which are arabesques in gold. Its only furniture is the throne and the divans, on which the members of the council sat. The Sultan could watch the proceedings of the Divan from a latticed window above the throne, which was occupied by the Grand Vizier, in the absence of the Sultan. The niche in which this window was placed communicated by a secret passage with the apartments of the Sultan, and the councillors could never be quite sure as to the presence or absence of his Imperial Highness when they assembled five times each week.

Mohammed II. introduced some luxurious customs into the Divan. He first presided with a desk before him, on which was a copy of the Koran set with jewels, which tradition says absolutely illuminated the hall. He rested his feet on a Persian rug embroidered with pearls, and in all his surroundings was quite the Turkish dude; but his love of luxury did not prevent his being a great warrior, neither did it so enervate him as to unfit him for carrying out the custom of slaughtering his royal brothers.

The meeting of the Divan was an ordeal for all, — for its members, who, by a word unwelcome to the Padishah, might lose their lives; and to those without, who could never be sure that the hour of their death was not being fixed within that sombre hall, where voices were low, and footsteps muffled in the thick winter rugs or the soft summer matting.

“It was a spectacle before which the boldest trembled, and the most innocent fearfully questioned their conscience. A pale light descending from above fell on the white turbans, the grave faces, the long beards, and rich dresses of the magnates. Their voices sounded one after the other, tranquil and monotonous as the murmur of a stream, while the accused, standing in the middle of the hall, knew not which mouth was speaking. Every look was studied, every word weighed, every thought divined; and the sentence of death came forth in quiet, low-voiced words, after long consultation in the midst of a sepulchral silence. But these haughty and impassive judges were startled in their turn, when Murad the Fourth or the Second Selim shook with furious hand the gilded lattice of the secret chamber! Then, after long silence and hurried consultation by the eyes, they resumed their sitting with impassible faces and solemn voices; but ice-cold hands were trembling under their long sleeves, and they recommended their souls to God.”<sup>1</sup>

Besides the Divan there were the Library, the College of Pages, and a multitude of kiosks not devoted to any special use. These were ornamented with lovely arabesques of fruit and flowers, panels in gold and porcelain, coloured glass, and every device except the representation of a human being, which was forbidden by the Koran. Fortunately this command was sometimes broken, or we should not have had the portraits of Mohammed II. and Suleiman the Magnificent. These kiosks were light and airy, as the Turks love to have their apartments. Repose and sleep were courted on their luxurious divans, while birds of all climes sang in their gilded cages, and fountains lazily contributed their soothing murmurs.

The vast kitchens afforded a sort of club-house for the pages, eunuchs, slaves, and minor officials and servants of the court. Even the Grand Vizier, when he dined at

<sup>1</sup> De Amicis.

the Seraglio, and all who were summoned to an audience and were not murdered, were fed at the kitchens. Forty thousand oxen were eaten there each year; and the daily supply of sheep, lambs, chickens, geese, and pigeons reached almost a thousand.

The marvellous resources of the cooks in the curious and ornamental arrangements of their dishes on the occasions of weddings and other fêtes, can scarcely be exaggerated. Even roasted sheep, when carved, set whole flocks of small birds at liberty, which achievement quite overshadows that of the cook in "Mother Goose," whose fame rests on but "four-and-twenty blackbirds" who sang from the "dainty dish to set before the king." Whole gardens, with lakes and fountains, flowers and shrubs, were made from sugar, as well as every sort of animal and bird known to these artists in sweets; and we can partly imagine the flavours of these delicacies when we taste the Turkish Delights and other Oriental confections of our own day.

It is curious to remember that the portion of the Old Seraglio of which we have spoken — a miniature world — was a man's world. No woman was seen within its borders. It was a fascinating world as well, — to those not subject to its dangers, — bright and gay in its decorations of brilliantly hued stuffs and banners; while men of all nations, in their splendid costumes and startling head-gear of endless variety, contributed to the general effect of a wizard's land. The elephants, caged lions, gazelles, monkeys, and tropical birds sent from afar as offerings to the Sultan, converted some spaces into most reputable zoölogical exhibitions; while the rich Persian rugs, luxurious Northern furs, priceless Indian cashmeres, and an endless variety of precious objects from all quarters of the globe, afforded a rarer treat to the artistic eye than could be enjoyed in many a celebrated museum.



There were certain types of men always to be seen here, noticeably the Janissaries and the eunuchs. The former were fierce and proud in bearing, each carrying at his belt weapons enough for a dozen men, while their coarse white turbans and yellow boots distinguished them from other soldiers. The eunuchs, both black and white, moved with dignity, as all others gave way and opened a path before their hideous faces and giant forms. The chief eunuch wielded a tremendous power, and his voluminous trousers, red tunic, or splendid brocades gave him the appearance of being even more enormous than he actually was.

Besides these, at intervals the keepers of the Sacred Standard passed through the courts, and every Moslem fell prone before them with cries of "Allah, Allah!" The muezzin who sounded the call to prayer within the gardens, naked dervishes just from Mecca, and the learned astrologers who directed the downsittings and uprisings of the Padishah, were reverentially saluted as they passed to and fro in the crowded Seraglio court.

The chief cook, with a gigantic spoon upon his shoulder, hustled here and there. The master of the robes passed by with the Sultan's garments for the day. Slaves of all nations, and aghas richly robed in cloth of gold and furs, huntsmen and chamberlains, secretaries and pashas, muftis, viziers, and ulemas, as well as the blood-curdling mutes, were seen passing and repassing, each on his own care intent. And one versed in such lore could say who and what each man of this vast concourse must be, from the cut or colour of his garment, the style of his head-dress, the peculiarity of his weapon, or some distinguishing sign about his costume.

"Other personal attendants of the Sultan were there too, — sandal-bearers, and eunuchs whose business it was to lick the floor before spreading the royal carpet; a wardrobe-keeper to



look after his turbans, and dust and polish the diamond aigrettes which glitter in the folds; the barber who shaves the Sultan's head, — his beard was cut by scissors, as not trusting a razor so near his throat; oculists to stain the eyelids of the ladies, and purveyors of flowers with which the harem was decorated, to say nothing of messengers continually passing and repassing on errands of life and death to pashas and ministers, bearers of those terrible Hatti-scherifs — edicts — which often desolated whole cities and provinces, — a motley crowd, yet all passing without haste or confusion through the dark gate of Ortu Kapu, — phlegmatic, calm, be it to live or die.”<sup>1</sup>

But of all this great palace that most mysterious portion, the harem, has a peculiar attraction for the feminine Western mind. It is here that the traveller and sight-seer desires to be admitted, by reason of the romance and the horrors associated with it. Here the ardent missionary desires to penetrate, that she may tell the sweet Christian story to these Moslem women, and assure them that they have souls, and teach them the true value of them. Here too I must believe that the sterner sex would gladly come to feast their eyes on Oriental beauty, and satisfy their abounding though persistently ignored curiosity; for on the three occasions when I have visited the harems of distinguished Moslems, the gentlemen, who were left in the outer courts, were apparently transformed into skilful lawyers during my absence, so shrewd and searching were they in my cross-examination when I rejoined them.

The harems of the sultans until the time of Abdul Hamid II., who attempts to make economies, have been luxuriously furnished; and that of the Old Seraglio was no exception. This portion of the palace was on the highest part of the hill; and the views from its windows embraced the blue sea, the Scutari hills, and the moun-

<sup>1</sup> Frances Elliot.

tains beyond. It was divided into a cluster of miniature palaces or kiosks in the midst of the gardens. The domes, pinnacles, crescents, and balls which ornamented them glittered in the sun, and at its best estate the whole scene was one of fairy-like beauty. The favourite sultanas had separate establishments, with numerous slaves to do their will.

The Mother Sultana lived like a royal lady, and wielded all the influence that her intelligence was equal to. Next her should be mentioned the aunts, sisters, and daughters of the Sultan. There were also the Gheducha, — daughters of felicity, — about to become mothers, and nurses who cared for the infants. There was also a great variety of slaves; musicians who amused the ladies, and those who fed them with the sweets which they devour in great quantities. There were the eunuchs who conducted the sultanas to the bath or the bazaar; those who attended the Sultana Valideh, who always moved in regal state; and there were those who trained the younger slaves, and prepared them to please the Padishah when he should weary of those he had already seen.

Guarded as the inmates of the harem were, they knew much that did not concern them, as the Sultan would have said. Everything of importance that happened in the Divan or the city was well known to a large number of them, and those of sufficient intelligence to acquire an influence were often very powerful.

How exciting and mysterious it must all have been! What passions have here spent themselves! What hopes have been blasted for the many, and what happiness and power conferred upon the few! This is now replaced by simple desolation: kiosks, towers, and lattices are crumbling and falling; gardens are neglected, vegetation is yellow and dirty, and no one is left to regret the beauty that has departed.

“Gone, all gone! Sultans, kadines, grand viziers, beys, aghas, slaves, — of all lands and all ages, — white-haired kanoums, stately validehs; youth and age, virgins and mothers.

“Some stabbed with a dagger as fine as a needle point, or strangled with an almost invisible skein of silk, or poisoned by a sweet drink or luscious-tasted fruit. A mystery of all mysteries, known but to the waves and those dark witnesses the cypresses, which have survived the rack of fire and ruin.”<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately we have an account of life in the harem from a lady who modestly conceals her name, but shows a perfect knowledge of the subjects of which she writes. After a residence of twenty years in Turkey, — since 1850, as I understand, when the reigning Sultan was not a recluse as now, — she gives the results of her experience, from which I shall quote sufficiently to afford an idea of the valuable information which she gives:—

“The haremlik of the Seraglio contains from a thousand to fifteen hundred women, divided among the Sultan’s household, that of his mother, and those of the princes. This vast host of women of all ranks, ages, and conditions are, without exception, of slave extraction, originating from the cargoes of slaves that yearly find their way to Turkey from Circassia, Georgia, Abyssinia, and Arabia, in spite of the prohibition of the slave-trade. . . . Possessed with the knowledge of no written language, with a confused idea of religion mixed with the superstitious practices that ignorance engenders, poorly clad, portionless, and unprotected, they are drawn into the Seraglio by chains of bondage. . . . The training they receive depends upon the career to which their age, personal attractions, and colour entitle them. The young and beautiful, whose lot has a great chance of being connected with that of his Imperial Majesty, or some high dignitary to whom she may be presented by the Valideh or the Sultan as odalisk or wife, receives a veneer composed of the formalities of Turkish etiquette, ele-

<sup>1</sup> Frances Elliot.

gance of deportment, the art of beautifying the person, dancing, singing, or playing on some musical instrument. To the young and willing, instruction is given in the rudiments of the Turkish language; they are also initiated in the simpler forms of Mohammedanism taught to women, and the observance of the fasts and feasts. . . . Many of these women possess great natural talent, and if favoured with some education, and endowed with a natural elegance, become very tolerable specimens of the fair sex. All the Seraglio inmates do not belong to this class on their entrance to the imperial abode; many of them have been previously purchased by Turkish *hanoums* — ladies — of high station, who from speculative or other motives give them the training described, and when sufficiently polished sell them at high prices, or present them to the Seraglio with the view to some object. . . . Ottoman sultans, with two exceptions, have never been known to marry; the mates of the Sultan, chosen from the slaves, or from those presented to him, can only be admitted to the honourable title of wife when they have borne children. (Of these there may be seven distinguished by numerical numbers.) The slaves that have borne children beyond this number are called ‘*hanoums* ;’ their children rank with the princes and princesses. Then there are the favourites who have no right to the title of wife or hanoum, and depend solely upon the caprice of their master and the influence they may have acquired over him, for their position in the household.

“Under this system every slave in the Seraglio, from the scullery maid to the fair and delicate beauty purchased for her personal charms, may aspire to attaining the rank of wife, odalisk, or favourite. . . . Generally speaking, however, the wives of sultans are select beauties who are offered to him yearly by the nation on the feast of Kandil Ghedjessi; others are gifts of the Valideh and other persons wishing to make an offering to the Sultan. When one of these odalisks has succeeded in gaining the good graces of the Sultan, he calls the under-superintendent of the harem, and notifies her of his desire to receive the favoured beauty in his apartment. The slave,



being informed of this, is bathed, dressed with great care and elegance, and introduced in the evening into the imperial presence. Should she find favour with her lord and master, she is admitted into a room reserved for slaves of this category during the time needful for ascertaining her future rank in the Seraglio. Should she bear a child, a special apartment is set apart for her. . . . The slave who by her interesting position becomes entitled to separate apartments receives a pension, has her own slaves, eunuchs, doctors, banker, carriages, and caiques, and is supplied with apparel, jewels, and all other requisites suited to her rank. She dines in her own rooms, receives her friends, and goes out when allowed to do so. On attaining this rank a new world, dazzling with gold, luxury, and every refinement belonging to the favoured and elevated, is opened to her, raising her far above her former companions in toil and frolic, who in future, setting aside all familiarity, stand before her with folded arms, kiss the hem of her garment, and obey her orders with profound respect. The favoured beauty fulfils the duties of her new position with the elegance, dignity, and *savoir faire* of an enchanted being, who, accustomed to the distant perspective of the fairyland which has been the one object of her dreams, suddenly attains it, and feels at home. Her single aim in life is now to preserve those charms which have caused her elevation."

Curiously enough, the fashion for blondes or brunettes changes in the imperial harem. In the days of Abdul Medjid blue-eyed, golden-haired beauties pleased the Sultan, and were sought and trained by those who wished to present them to him; and many brunettes who used a certain fluid sold by the hair-dressers of Pera paid for their folly in maladies which it induced.

While most of the seraili are entirely uneducated, there are occasionally gifted natures there, women who would be refined and ladylike under all circumstances. The real Turkish lady is dignified and elegant, friendly to those whom she likes, but proud and reserved to those



who do not please her. Some of them are sensitive to a degree that totally unfits them for life unblessed with affection, and they pine and fade away, unless by some happy chance, which rarely occurs, they are set free and married.

Another class of serailis are called "wild," and are cunning, mischievous, extravagant, and unruly. In spite of the authority of the eunuchs and all possible watchfulness, these disorderly creatures are constantly perpetrating the most unexpected tricks. During the reign of Abdul Medjid this class became so troublesome that some were exiled, and some married to minor officials, who were sent to posts at a distance from the capital; and in spite of rich gifts and court favours, these compulsory husbands were much to be pitied.

There are frequent amusements for the members of the imperial harem. These largely depend on the tastes of the Sultan. Abdul Medjid built a theatre, in which European actors appeared, and the ladies of his harem witnessed the performances behind lattices. This Sultan was very fond of ballet dancing, and of various European entertainments, and also enjoyed the marionettes of his own people. He was indulgent to his harem, and afforded its inmates the opportunity to go shopping in the foreign quarters of Pera, to their infinite delight.

Garden-parties and picnics have always been favourite amusements with Turkish ladies. These were sometimes very gay. Some of the maidens dressed as pages, and made love to their companions. There was music and dancing, while fireworks and illuminations added to the fascination of the scene; and the races in caiques, when the fair rowers were in the most diaphanous of costumes, made a favourite feature of the entertainment.

The more dignified sultanas and hanoums were comfortably seated on rugs, and watched the gay scene with

interest. Sherbets, fruits, ices, and sweets, together with cigarettes, helped to make the time pass agreeably; but the moments of supreme excitement were those in which the Sultan indolently approached a group, or singled out some especial favourite, and spent a few moments in saying a pleasant word, and perhaps bestowed some gentle caress, as he passed through the gardens.

The life which we have outlined is much the same in all the imperial palaces, of which there are more than twenty. They are variously named seraglios, yahlis, and kiosks, according to their size. They are mostly near the Bosphorus, though a few are inland. Next to the Old Seraglio in importance are Dolmabatchke and Beshiktash. These palaces, uniting European architecture with Oriental ornament, are not especially attractive or satisfactory in their style; but they are surrounded with delightful grounds, and have extensive and charming views from the interiors, as well as from the shore and the heights at the back of the palaces.

The valleys around Beshiktash are public walks, and as there are tombs in them they are also places of pilgrimage; but the actual gardens of the palaces are enclosed by high walls. Some idea of their luxuriance is afforded by the tops of the trees which may be seen, and by the vines, which, having lined the walls, hang over the outside like a green curtain. These two palaces, with their detached buildings and kiosks, form a succession of imperial residences such as can be nowhere seen away from the enchanting shores of the Bosphorus.

Another charming retreat from the bustle and stir of Stamboul is the Palace of Beylerbey, a favourite residence with Abdul Aziz; it was here that he first saw the Sultana Mihri. It is situated on the Asiatic shore, and is an ugly edifice, but surrounded by such lovely woods

and commanding such an outlook as easily explain its fascination. This was the palace of Eugénie while visiting Abdul Aziz, and the whole palace was refitted for her reception. As we have said, Abdul Aziz wished to be taken to Beylerbey after his deposition.

The Palace of Cheragan, in which the same Sultan and the Sultana Mihri died, is not far from Bishiktash. Built by Mohammed II., and renovated by Abdul Aziz, it has commended itself to the Turks as a charming palace; few foreigners, however, would agree with them in the regard they bestow on it. Nevertheless, De Amicis found some things in it to praise:—

“Nothing of all the splendour remains in my memory except the Sultan’s baths, made of whitest marble, sculptured with pendent flowers and stalactites, and decorated with fringes and delicate embroideries that one feared to touch, so fragile did they seem. The disposition of the rooms reminded me vaguely of the Alhambra. Our steps made no sound upon the rich carpets spread everywhere. Now and then a eunuch pulled a cord, and a green curtain rose and displayed the Bosphorus, Asia, a thousand ships, a great light; and then all vanished again, as in a flash of lightning. The rooms seemed endless, and as each door appeared we hastened our steps; but a profound silence reigned in every part, and there was no vestige of any living being, nor rustle of garment save the sound made by the silken door-curtains as they fell behind. At last we were weary of that endless journey from one splendid empty room to another, seeing ourselves reflected in great mirrors, with the black faces of our guides and the group of silent servants, and were thankful to find ourselves again in the free air, in the midst of the ragged, noisy denizens of Tophane.”

Yildiz Kiosk, the palace constantly occupied by Abdul Hamid II., is so small as to seem quite unsuitable for the home of a Sultan. As it is three miles from Constantinople, he is always in retreat; and when he is seen on his

way to the mosque, his emaciation and the expression of his large, sad eyes excite a sympathy one does not often feel for a person in so exalted a position.

We have spoken of the chief imperial residences on the shores of the Bosphorus. They contribute an element of interest to these charming shores which one is never weary of praising, and which have ever been invested with romantic associations since Medea planted a laurel-tree at Koron Chesmesh, and the Argonauts erected a temple and a winged statue in honour of the protecting genius who had given them their victory.

## CHAPTER XI.

### S. SOPHIA AND THE AHMEDYEH.

THE difference in the effect of the mosque of S. Sophia — Aya Sofia Jamissi — when seen from a distance or near at hand, is little short of marvellous. From the heights of Pera or Scutari the dome rises into the air, the minarets soar above it, and one is content with this view of “Agia-Sophia,” the Temple of Divine Wisdom, and anticipates the emotions of reverence and pleasure which a nearer view of the great mosque will inspire.

But, alas! a closer acquaintance but discloses a mass of irregular additions and excrescences which entirely conceal the original form of the church of Constantine, or even of the mosque of Mohammed II. The crowded shops, stalls, tombs, and baths now placed between the buttresses of Murad IV., the refuges and kitchens for the poor, and various other buildings and booths entirely destroy the outline of the edifice, and leave in the mind a confused idea of a vast central object, on which hang all sorts of dependencies, without beauty or order.

From below one cannot see the central dome encircled by its forty windows, nor the six other half and quarter domes, nor the crescent which cost fifty thousand ducats. To see all this, one must be far away; and even then the silvery covering of the dome, which once shone with splendour, is gone, and the heavy pedestals supporting the minarets give to the edifice the air of a fortress rather than that of a temple; and the walls being in pink and



white stripes, the general effect is curious and surprising rather than grand and impressive.

Although S. Sophia was founded by Constantine the Great, it has been twice burned. It was injured by the mobs of Greens and Blues in the reign of Justinian, and essentially rebuilt by him. Earthquakes have shaken it, two Murads have strengthened and adorned it; and, in truth, fifteen centuries would be a long time for any work of man to stand so well that we could hope to have before us the original design, the original finish, or, in fact, *the original* in any large degree.

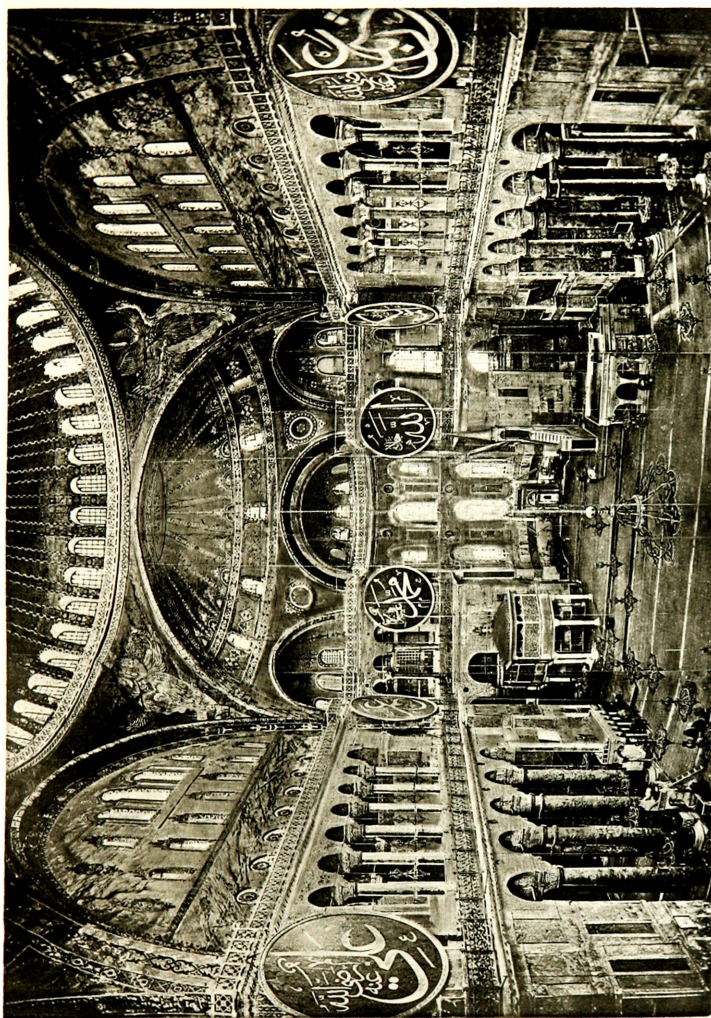
This mosque, however, stands where Constantine built his church, where Theodosius rebuilt it, and where Justinian, enlarging the foundations, erected a far more splendid temple than had preceded it, much of which still remains.

Here this emperor came, in the linen tunic of a working-man, to cheer and to hasten the ten thousand whom he had employed for this great work; and we can well understand his triumphant joy, when on that Christmas Eve thirteen and a half centuries ago, he rushed from the entrance to the altar, with outstretched hands, and shouting, "God be praised, who has esteemed me worthy to complete this work!" and then, in a burst of rapture, with hands closed, he added, "O Solomon, I have even surpassed thee!"

Earthquakes and other casualties have since weakened the dome; and the work of Justinian in that particular has been supplemented by Basil and Andronicus, while several sultans have contributed their care and money to preserve the temple and make it what it is to-day. Its religious and historical importance can scarcely be over-estimated. Its marble columns alone represent the history, civilization, and art of many nations, gathered as they have been from Phrygia, Laconia, Egypt, Baalbec,



*Interior of Mosque of St. Sophia.*







Rome, Troas, Cyzicus, Athens, and the Cyclades. Besides these there are the Thessalian, Molossian, and Proconnesian marbles, as well as that from the neighbouring quarries of the Bosphorus.

The temples of Isis and Osiris, of the Sun and Moon at Ephesus, of the Athenian Pallas, of Phœbus at Delos, and Cybele at Cyzicus, all contributed of their treasures to uphold the Christian Basilica of Justinian. With its marbles, its precious metals, its ivory, pearl, amber, and cedar, its thousands of workmen, and its hundred architects, we may well say that the entire world was placed under an imposition for the glory of the Temple of the Divine Wisdom.

The emperors and their architects would seem to have been the creators of this splendid monument; but tradition teaches that a higher power than that of Constantine and Justinian directed its construction. We are told that an angel gave the plan to Justinian in a dream, and appeared the second time in the guise of a eunuch to hasten the completion of the work, on which occasion he swore by the Wisdom of God to guard the temple while the boy who had been left in charge of the tools should summon the workmen; and yet again when the treasury was empty, the angel led the treasury mules into a subterranean vault and loaded them heavily with pure gold. Thus the plan of the temple, and its name, — taken from the angel's oath, — and the money for its completion were all the gift of this heavenly being. And yet again, when the emperor and the architect could not agree upon the method for lighting the eastern apse, the angel appeared, clad in imperial purple, and commanded the light to be admitted by three windows, in honour of the Holy Trinity.

Sixteen years were spent in the gathering of the materials and the construction of the temple; and the celebra-

tion of its completion, beginning on Christmas Day, 548, lasted fourteen days, and was as magnificent as the resources of that magnificent age could make it.

It was at this time that a great miracle was wrought; for on the day before the public ceremonial, Justinian commanded that around the dome, in gigantic letters, should be inscribed these words: "Justinian dedicates this Church to the Glory of God;" and this was done. But next day, when seated beside the high altar, on his golden throne, with the Labarum and the brazen eagle beside him, the Patriarch on a second throne, and all the court surrounding them, when he raised his eyes to the dome where his own name should have been, he read that of Euphrasia, a name quite unknown to him. In great excitement Justinian demanded the meaning of this from the Patriarch, who could explain nothing; and then the emperor called out, "Does any one here know a woman by this name?" and a poor boy who scrubbed the pavement answered, "O Imperial Cæsar, to whom I dare not raise my eyes, there is a poor bedridden woman in a little house close by the walls of the church who bears this name."

Straightway Justinian despatched his messengers to bring the woman before him; and when she was brought, he saw an aged woman shaking with fear.

"What know you of this inscription?" demanded the emperor, pointing to the dome.

"Nothing, my lord, nothing," she replied, sinking in a swoon, from which she was at length restored; and then Justinian cried,—

"But what have you done towards building this temple, that your name displaces mine? Some evil power has been at work."

"Great Emperor, I have done nothing. My lord mocks me."

But again the emperor demands: "Have you neither thought nor spoken nor done anything that should cause this miracle? Reflect, and tell me all."

"There is but one little act, your Majesty, and that so slight that I dare not trouble your ears with its recital. It is but this: as I have lain upon my bed, close to these walls, I grieved to hear the cries and groans of the beasts that carried the heavy loads of marble, bricks, and beams up the steep hill; and when I grew a little stronger, I took my bed out to the road, and scattered its straw along the path, and though it was not much, the straw increased beneath my hand until the whole road was covered, and from that time the poor dumb beasts cried out no more."

When her story ended, the emperor, whose eyes were moist with tears, rose from his throne, and, pointing to the dome, said solemnly: "The name of Euphrasia shall stand. She hath done more than I, for she hath given her all." He then commanded that she be taken to the Palatium, and cared for as faithfully as he himself could be.

The accounts we have of the richness and beauty of Justinian's S. Sophia sound like tales of the achievements of magicians rather than like the works of ordinary men. The ruin that had been accomplished already by repeated conflagrations in Constantinople served as a warning to the emperor, who determined that no wood should be used in the building except in some of the doors. The pavement and all the marbles glistened brilliantly; the walls were of splendid mosaics. Above the high altar towered colossal representations of Christ, the Virgin and Saints, while four mighty archangels looked down from the spandrels of the dome.

The altar was a mine of precious stones fused into a bed of gold and silver. It was enclosed in a Holy of Holies, sacred from profane eyes, and entered by veiled

doors. The doors of the temple were of silver gilt, ivory, amber, and cedar, and a few of them were veneered with wood said to have been used in Noah's ark. The trumpets employed in certain ceremonials were believed to be the same that overthrew the walls of Jericho, and many similar treasures were in the keeping of this marvellous temple.

From the time of Constantine the Great to that of Constantine Palæologus, S. Sophia was the scene of the celebration of all great events in the lives of its imperial rulers. Processions and coronations, royal marriages and baptisms here had place. Here, at important crises, the emperors received the Eucharist, as did that last brave Constantine on the morning when he went out to die before the advance of Mohammed II.

Here the Crusaders and the warriors of many nations cemented their alliances and forgot their differences. Here was the ill-fated Baldwin crowned; here Constantine deposited the Labarum, and Belisarius and Narses hung up their trophies; and into the midst of this Basilica Mohammed II. rode, his mace in hand, and, offering the prayers of his religion, declared this temple of the living God to be that of Allah and his Prophet.

Within the Basilica there were suites of apartments for the use of the emperors, and from it colonnades led to the Palatium Sacrum, thus affording a passage for the frequent processions between the church and the palace. Constantine was the "master-builder" of his age. His city was planned on the most magnificent scale, and he left the Apostolic simplicity far behind. Neither did he confine himself to Christian motives in art. The scorn of S. Paul for the statues of the Greeks was not echoed by Constantine, who admitted to the colonnades and vestibules of S. Sophia the statues of pagan deities, and did not blush to place the representations of emperors and



empresses beside those of Jesus Christ and his Blessed Mother.

We can but regret that we have so little, perhaps I should say that we have nothing, remaining from the time of Constantine, in the way of pure Byzantine art, which then essentially had its birth. Then it was that mosaics, which had previously been used for pavements, were elevated to the decoration of altars and chapels, and the walls of various apartments, especially those set in a gold ground. I know of no better examples of this art now remaining than the famous mosaics of Ravenna, which belong to the fifth century.

Important ecclesiastical councils were held in S. Sophia, and the quarrels of many sects accommodated, and peace restored only to be again disturbed by the dreams and practices of mystics or the repulsive doctrines of religious realists. The Greeks seem to have had no hesitation at using a church for the most ardent quarrels, accompanied by such violence as belonged to the circus rather than to the house of God, if only the dispute concerned a matter of religious doctrine or practice. When the grave difference arose between the Greeks and Latins regarding the wording of the Trisagion,—“Holy God, holy mighty, holy immortal, have mercy upon us,”—the scene in S. Sophia was most exciting, and to the modern mind disgraceful.

The original form in Isaiah's vision was “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts.” The form given above is that which S. Proclus's boy heard the angels sing before he was taken up into heaven, in the presence of the bishop and people of Constantinople. When, therefore, it was attempted to add, “who was crucified for us,” it was rejected as a dangerous blasphemy; and when two opposing choirs chanted the Trisagion at the same moment in the Basilica, one with and the other without this addition, religious feeling ran high.



“ Not only are the priests foremost and most violent during the service, but the laity also join in hostile ranks, gesticulating as at the popular cock-fight or at a tussle of wild beasts. Cheers, groans, and hisses ring round the sacred walls ; stalwart ruffians of the Blue and Green factions rush down from the Hippodrome above, to jostle, swagger, and scream. The scented *élégants* of the day, in flowing robes of silk and delicately embroidered linen, attended by their slaves and pages, look on and smile. Sober citizens stand aside, amused and edified ; and the dark figures of infuriated monks glide about, cursing, encouraging, and exhorting !

“ As the voices of the choirs swell through the aisles, the dispute waxes hotter ; bricks and fragments of stone are flung about with fatal precision, and, as the chanting of the Trisagion continues, the extraordinary and indecent spectacle is beheld of wounded men carried out, streaming with blood, and brawny-armed priests with robes rent confronting the Imperial Guard.”<sup>1</sup>

Deeply as one must regret that this ancient and revered temple of Christianity has been for centuries the mosque of the Turk, we are ever compelled to blush at the remembrance that it was robbed of its treasures and magnificence by Christians. It was an army having for its avowed purpose the preservation of the sacred places of the earth that despoiled this Basilica, and scattered its artistic treasures to the far-away cities, where they are still displayed with a seeming pride, as if to possess the booty of these ancient, sacrilegious Christian robbers was in some sense an honour.

With such thoughts in mind, as one raises his eyes to the colossal image of Divine Wisdom which the Moslem whitewash veils without concealing, and regards the four gigantic cherubim of the gallery, with their twenty-four resplendent wings, one involuntarily wishes that a

<sup>1</sup> Frances Elliot.

panoramic procession of all that has passed beneath the eyes of these glorious representations of religious faith could now wind in and out of this old sanctuary; for to the Christian, despite the present reign of Islamism, S. Sophia is the church of Constantine and Justinian rather than the mosque of Mohammed II.

In spite of its present bareness, imagination conjures up the processions of luxurious Greeks who escorted and followed emperors and empresses as they came here to receive their crowns, make their vows or render thanks for blessings received.

How glorious a spectacle it must have been when Justinian and Theodora, side by side, passed to this altar! Can we not picture it? A path is kept for them with difficulty by the Dalmatian soldiers whose duty it is to keep the crowds within the purple silken cords that have been stretched with that design. The walls are hung with costly draperies and exquisite garlands, and the people find much on which to feast their eyes while waiting for the sound of the silver trumpets heralding the approach of the emperor.

He comes with regal bearing, splendid in his imperial robes and buskins; and she, called "the divine," is dazzling to the eye beholding her as is the sun, so covered is she with glorious jewels. Her rich hair, flowing free upon her shoulders, is thickly sown with gems, while a circlet of enormous single precious stones is on her head. Her purple dalmatica is bordered with jewels and fastened by a clasp of untold value, while the pearls that encircle her neck in numerous strings and fall upon her breast can scarcely be conceived of in these less sumptuous days.

Justinian has bestowed on her power and rank equal to his own, by virtue of which she proudly bears the sceptre in one hand, and in the other the globe, over which she aims to rule. Behind her, with humble bearing, clinging robes,

and splendid jewels, her seven ladies walk; and following them a long line of glittering Cæsars and men of highest rank, while the Varangians, eunuchs, and lesser officials, all splendidly attired, complete the grand procession.

Within the inner narthex the Patriarch, surrounded by bishops, priests, and monks, — all splendidly attired, according to the custom of that splendid age, — receives the imperial pair with solemn greetings; and the double procession moves to the high altar, where the representatives of spiritual and earthly power are each enthroned beneath resplendent canopies, and screened from the too curious gaze of the masses by the jewelled veil with its famous fringes of gems.

This momentous ceremonial is followed by many others, abounding in interest as in magnificence, until after two centuries and a quarter the infamous Empress Irene — who is honoured as a saint in the Greek calandar — comes in state to this high altar, and here receives the incense with which the Patriarch, himself swinging the censer, condescends to surround her.

We turn from this depressing spectacle, remembering that so ambitious was this fiendish empress that no sin deterred her, if by its commission her power could be assured. She blinded her only son that he might be incapable of reigning; and to this very altar came the five brothers of her husband, whom she had blinded or deprived of their tongues!

It was an unaccustomed scene when, after five years of imprisonment, they escaped to S. Sophia, and in this great Basilica filled with worshippers made their sad appeal.

“ ‘Countrymen and Christians,’ cried Nicephorus for himself and his mute brethren, ‘behold the sons of your emperor, if you can still recognize our features in this miserable state. A life, an imperfect life, is all that the malice of our enemies has spared. It is now threatened, and we throw ourselves on your compassion.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

Other hopeless victims of unscrupulous power fled to the shelter of this altar for aid and comfort. Here the elder Isaac Angelus appealed for safety from Andronicus, and obtained an answer to his prayer; and here came that other Isaac who, after being blinded and imprisoned for eleven years, was liberated by the chances of the Fourth Crusade, and with his son Alexius reigned again.

This incident makes a curious picture in the life of Constantinople and in the annals of S. Sophia. The blind old Isaac was borne to the Basilica in a litter, beside which Alexius rode in a high golden chariot, his youthful, handsome face lighted up by the joy with which this auspicious day filled his heart. But the trivial Greeks were quite untouched by this unusual spectacle of filial tenderness in an imperial youth, and did not especially observe the ceremony which proceeded amidst their jests and flippant talk; while in the women's gallery the simpering, painted, bejewelled creatures flirted their fans and made eyes at the young Alexius in a way that even shocked the writers of that age, accustomed as they were to all kinds of feminine indecencies.

Of the day on which Mohammed II. took possession of this temple we have spoken, and from that time until the present reign S. Sophia has been as sacred to the Moslems as to the Christians in the earlier centuries. During the Ramadan, in the seven holy nights of Islam, the ceremonies in S. Sophia were among the most solemn and splendid that are known to the church of the Prophet.

Since the Sheik Ak Shemsheddin, the companion of Mohammed II., first read the Koran here, it has been the resort of teachers and scholars, who here, near the miraculous window, from which a fresh current of air ever comes, read, study, and expound the words of their sacred book.

The Christian, not being permitted to enter a mosque



during service, must ever find it a desolate, depressing place. The vast floor, covered by matting in warm weather and rugs in cold, stretches out in a vast, uninterrupted plane. The galleries are supported by double ranges of pillars, one hundred and seven in all, which produce a sharp contrast between the portion of the edifice which they richly ornament and the extreme plainness of the nave.

Where the splendid altar stood there is a slab of red marble, above which hangs a sacred carpet, very old, faded, and dirty, but of inexpressible value to the Mohammedans, since it is one of four used by the Prophet in his devotions. The faces of the four cherubim — the only perfect mosaics remaining — are hidden by golden suns, as the representation of the human face is not permitted by the Koran.

Enormous green disks inscribed with pious texts in great letters of gold are fastened on the walls of the upper gallery, and lower down are porphyry cartouches bearing the names of Allah, the Prophet and his Caliphs. The *Mihrab* — the sacred depository of the Koran — is turned towards Mecca, in which direction the rush mats and praying carpets are also turned, as every Mussulman must pray with his face towards that sacred city. These mats have a peculiar appearance, their lines running diagonally to the lines of the architecture of the edifice. The pavement beneath them is of marble, the veining of which is so arranged that it gives the appearance of three streams flowing through the edifice in wavy undulations. The *minber*, or Friday pulpit, is almost grotesque. It is placed against a pillar, and reached by a long, narrow staircase, the balustrades of which are in an open carving as delicate as lace. Two small flags hang on each side to symbolize the victories of the Moslems over both Jews and Christians, thus setting aside both the Old and New Testaments. On



every Friday the *Kiatib* mounts the pulpit, with the Koran in one hand and a wooden sword in the other, as is done in every conquered mosque. The Sultan's pew is a curious little structure raised on pillars, from which he can see, while he is invisible to others. Cords from which silken tassels, roc's eggs, crystal lustres, and horse-tails are suspended, hang from the dome, and sustain hoops of wire on which lamps are fastened. A goodly number of little desks are scattered about, shaped like a capital X, inlaid with pearl and copper, and used for holding the Koran and sacred manuscripts.

No ornaments save the inscriptions are permitted, as the Moslem believes that the Deity fills the temple, in accord with the sentence in the top of the dome, which was pronounced by Mohammed II., as he sat on his horse before the high altar on the day of his triumph, "Allah is the light of heaven and of earth." This is inscribed in white letters on a black ground, some of them being thirty-six feet long.

Such are the superficial observations that one makes when first he enters this wonderful temple. Later he will realize that the effect of the nave is extremely grand and impressive. De Amicis speaks well when he says:

"The eye embraces an enormous vault, a bold architecture of half-domes that seem suspended in the air, measureless pilasters, gigantic arches, colossal columns, galleries, tribunes, porticoes, upon all of which a flood of light descends, from a thousand (?) great windows; there is a something rather scenic and princely than sacred; an ostentation of grandeur and force, an air of mundane elegance, a confusion of classic, barbarous, capricious, presumptuous, and magnificent; a grand harmony, in which, with the thundering and formidable note of the cyclopean arches and pilasters, there are mingled the gentle and low strain of the Oriental canticle, the clamorous music of the feasts of Justinian and Heraclitus, echoes of pagan songs, faint voices

of an effeminate and worn-out race, and distant cries of Goth and Vandal; there is a faded majesty, a sinister nudity, a profound peace; an idea of the basilica of St. Peter contracted and toned down, and of St. Mark's grosser, larger, and deserted; a mixture heretofore unseen of temple, church, and mosque, of severity and puerility, of ancient things and modern, of ill-assorted colours, and odd, bizarre ornaments; a spectacle, in short, which at once astonishes and displeases, and leaves the mind for a moment uncertain, seeking the right word to express and affirm its thought."

This splendid nave, despite its size, is but a small portion of the mosque. Temples might be made within this temple; the porticoes which support the lateral galleries are fit for basilicas themselves. Their columns, architraves, and pilasters are huge, and, looking from them, into the nave between the columns of the temple of Ephesus, one has the sensation of being in an edifice quite independent of the other; and in many portions of the mosque this sensation is repeated, notably when in the enormous galleries, each one of which could hold thousands of people.

From these galleries, looking over the balustrade, one gets a glorious view of S. Sophia. From here it is simply gigantic. The arches, pilasters, and all other architectural features are enormous. Everything that is essentially a part of the mosque is magnified, while everything that has been placed in it is dwarfed into utter insignificance. One hears the low murmur of the Moslems who are ever reading the Koran or reciting verses, and sees in that far-away nave a few men or boys moving silently about, seeming to be in another sphere from that of the lofty gallery; and there is a mysterious effect, a sort of other-worldliness, as if one had passed into another condition of spirit while mounting that curiously ascending spiral way which led one hither.

One may study various specialties in this mosque, of which that of the wonderful columns is most interesting. Their differences are made so clear by their contact, and their beauties are thus so pronounced. To learn where each originally belonged is no small task, and is a study quite worth while. Probably in no other one collection could the peculiarities and differences of these exquisite crystalline limestones be so readily observed. In these columns, of a variety of sizes, and in the slabs of the ancient lining of the walls which still remain, there are specimens of all the rarest and richest marbles of the world. To all this variety of veining and of colour are added innumerable specimens of styles in decoration. In the capitals, friezes, cornices, pedestals, balustrades, and even in the shafts of columns are the most exquisite and the most fantastic designs. Animals, foliage, crosses, rosettes, and chimeras, with many other figures, are mingled in a manner that shocks our artistic sense, but has an inexpressible fascination for our eyes.

As all the world knows, the great wonder of S. Sophia is the dome, which one must feel powerless to describe sufficiently. Madame de Staël's saying, that the dome of S. Peter's is like an abyss suspended over one, must recur to all who stand beneath that of S. Sophia. It is so large that wherever you stand you seem to be under it, and its forty encircling windows afford such light as illuminates every portion of the mosque. One is not surprised that the people of the sixth century believed it to have been built by a miracle; which impression was deepened by the constant presence of the emperor and the continual chanting of the priests, while the fairy-weighted bricks from Rhodes — each inscribed with holy words — were skilfully laid, and, so to speak, cemented at every twelfth row with sacred relics.

East and west of the great dome are semi-domes, and

each of these is cut into by smaller domes, making seven domes altogether.

“As it is, the eye wanders upwards from the large arcades of the ground floor to the smaller arches of the galleries, and thence to the smaller semi-domes. These lead the eye on to the larger, and the whole culminates in the great central roof. Nothing, probably, so artistic has been done on the same scale before or since. In these arrangements S. Sophia seems to stand alone.”<sup>1</sup>

The same celebrated author says:—

“If, however, the proportions of the church are admirable, the details are equally so. . . . S. Sophia is so essentially different from the greater number of churches that it is extremely difficult to institute a comparison between them. With regard to external effect, Gothic cathedrals generally excel it; but whether by accident or by the inherent necessity of the style, is by no means clear. In so far as the interior is concerned, no Gothic architect ever rose to the conception of a hall one hundred feet wide, two hundred and fifty feet in length, and one hundred and eighty feet high, and none ever disposed each part more artistically to obtain the effect he desired to produce. . . . In fact, turn it as we will, and compare it as we may with any other buildings of its class, the verdict seems inevitable that S. Sophia—internally at least, for we may omit the consideration of the exterior, as unfinished—is the most perfect and most beautiful church which has yet been erected by any Christian people.”

No one visit to S. Sophia can even suffice as an introduction to its acquaintance. Like S. Peter's and San Marco or Westminster Abbey; like the Halls of Karnak, the Jain temples and the rock-cut temples of India, — like everything, in fact, which is great and grand and uplifting, and has originated in a sincere human desire to express

<sup>1</sup> Fergusson.



the best of man and his highest aspirations towards his God, — it must be frequently visited and studied with reverence, even with love, before the heights and depths of its beauty and glory can be discerned.

We have spoken in sufficient detail of the day when Mohammed and his Janissaries found the inhabitants of Constantinople gathered in S. Sophia, confidently awaiting a miraculous deliverance from the terrible Moslem. But we have not recited a pretty legend connected with that scene which says that as the people waited breathlessly for the angel who was to save them, as they listened to the blows of the battle-axes on the brazen gates, and as the savage hordes poured in to desecrate the altars, to snatch the sacred vessels from their accustomed places, and to inaugurate an orgy, in which the cries of women and children being inhumanly butchered, or bound and carried into slavery, mingled with the screech of trumpets and the roll of drums, — that all this while an aged priest was absorbed in saying Mass at a distant altar, and was only brought to a consciousness of what was happening around him by the agonizing cries of his people and the noise of the horses' shoes upon the marble pavement.

Perfectly calm in the midst of the frightful scene, he carefully bore the Host into an internal nave; but a number of soldiers pursued him, and had raised their scimitars above him, when the solid wall opened and closed again.

The priest had disappeared, and the sacred wafer was saved from desecration, but no line or mark was left behind him. The wall was a perfect whole, and the astounded Mussulmans could find nothing. We are told that faint sounds are heard at times through the thickness of the wall, which proves that the saintly priest still lives, still chants the liturgy, and waits the time when S. Sophia shall be restored to the Christian Church, and



the wall opening will set him free to finish at the altar the Mass begun in 1453.

We have already spoken of several important mosques in connection with the lives of their builders; and as the interior of one mosque closely resembles another, there is little to add concerning the mosques of Constantinople, which are a multitude in number.

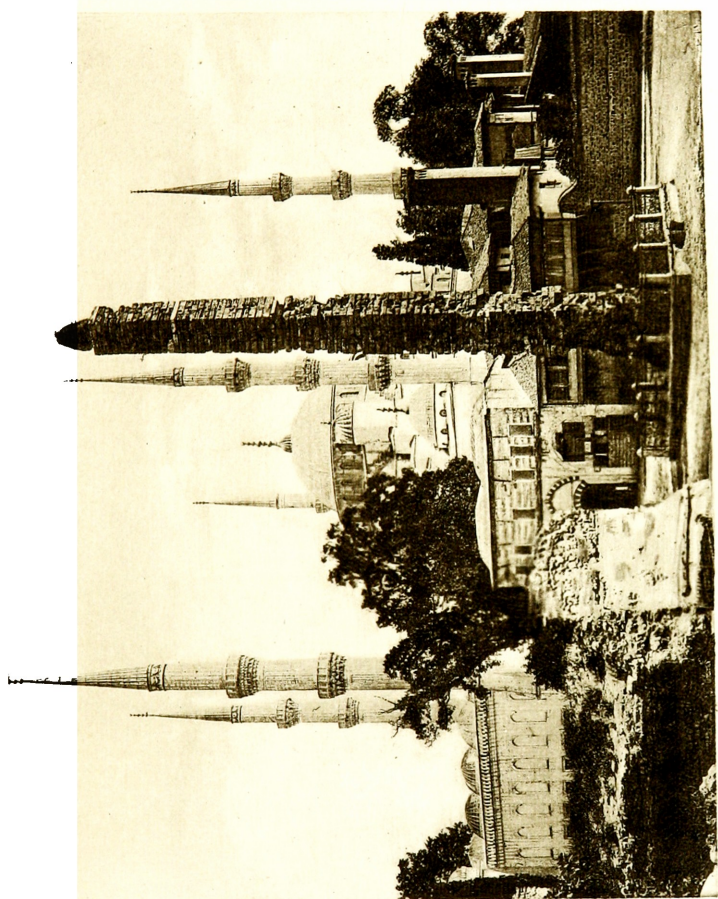
The mosque of Sultan Ahmed I. is peculiar on account of its six minarets, which caused some trouble to its builder. Only the Kaaba at Mecca had this number, and the Imam declared that Ahmed was committing a sacrilege in erecting another mosque to equal that of the sacred city. Consequently the work was suspended until Ahmed, who was a man of resources, could have a seventh minaret added to the Kaaba, when he was permitted to finish his own mosque according to his original design.

A second peculiarity of its construction is what would elsewhere be called a cloister, which surrounds a portion of the court, in the middle of which is a fountain of an extremely ornamental style, covered with a sort of gilded cage.

Before the reign of Abdul Hamid, when great ceremonies were in order, the Ahmedyeh was the mosque of the State, as S. Sophia was that of the court. It was from the pulpit of this mosque that the decree which put an end to the power of the Janissaries was read, and on account of its open surroundings it was favourable for processions and impressive ceremonies. Here the two chief festivals of the Bairam had place, as well as that instituted in 1858 by Murad III., called the *Mirlood*, which celebrated the birthday of the Prophet. Other festive ceremonies occurred here which brought out the greatest splendours of the court and State, and were celebrated with true Oriental magnificence on this spot, formerly a part of the Hippodrome, where from the days



*The Mosque of Sultan Ahmed.*







of Constantine the Great many imposing spectacles had been witnessed.

The Ahmedyeh is comparatively modern, dating only from the beginning of the seventeenth century. It was an enormously expensive mosque, and has been richly endowed, not only by its founder, but by other rich and pious Moslems, both with money and with rare and precious objects for its decoration.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ANTIQUITIES OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

TO speak of the walls of Constantinople to-day, or of making their circuit, in the sense which that phrase carried thirty years ago, — when I first saw them, — is not possible. So large a portion of them has disappeared, and so constantly crumbling are they, that it is now best to speak only of certain features which may still be identified and are of interest. This is also true of other antiquities in Constantinople. Probably fragments of ancient Byzantium still exist here and there, — bits that have escaped the vandalism of man and the wreck of time; but it is doubtful if there is any authority on these subjects upon which we can rely with absolute confidence.

The walls of Constantinople once extended entirely around the triangle of Stamboul, and were pierced by twenty-eight gates. On the side of the Golden Horn one may say, speaking generally, that walls have disappeared, and gates are replaced by numerous landing-stages for the numberless steamers, to and from which the passengers quietly pass, with such an every-day sort of air that it is difficult to realize that such obstacles ever existed as the brave old Dandolo was forced to overcome before he could effect an entrance to this famous city.

On the Sea of Marmora there are many ruins of walls, gates, and towers remaining; but they are inferior in colour, and lack the picturesqueness which the traveller demands of the relics of that Byzantium of which he has read the most heroic and poetic descriptions. And alas!

commonplace ship-building goes on near Seraglio Point, and the shore is lined with wooden sheds and other useful buildings, replacing the graceful, glittering kiosks which our fancy has been accustomed to picture here. Truly the progressive civilization of our day has a cruel habit of shivering to atoms our cherished ideals of distant places of the earth; and one discerns no difference in the sound of the hammers on the ringing metal at Stamboul from that heard at East Boston and elsewhere in cities that were never walled, that have endured no sieges and witnessed no triumphs. How rapidly the cities of the world are becoming cosmopolitan, if one might apply that word in such a sense; for to one who has watched the similarizing process of the last half-century, it sometimes seems that, except for differences in language, the large cities of the world would not be essentially disturbed if they changed places, and Stamboul, for example, were set down between the Hudson and East rivers, and the Gothamites woke up to find themselves on the borders of the Golden Horn.

Of the walls of Constantinople, however, sufficient still remains to give a just idea of their ancient grandeur. In height, strength, and picturesqueness they were unsurpassed; and even to-day there are portions — tottering, to be sure, but held together by strong, clinging vines — which prove that language could not exaggerate their original impressiveness.

On the land side the triple wall still stands in many places. Built by Theodosius the Younger, who enclosed a much larger territory than Constantine the Great had done, they were strengthened by Heraclius, who extended them around the quarter of the Blachernæ. Later emperors also repaired them, and they extended from the Castle of the Seven Towers on the Sea of Marmora, on and on, four or more miles.

These walls, rising and descending with the surface lines, topped with frequent towers, both round and square, present a most remarkable appearance; and the more familiar one becomes with them the more grand and wonderful do they seem. As with the first sight of whatever is grand and great in Nature or in human achievement, the mind is occupied in grasping, not only the object itself, but its surroundings, its uses, and a variety of similar subjects; and not until we are familiar with these do we abandon ourselves to experience the maximum effect which it is able to produce on us personally.

The restorations made since the Mohammedan conquest are insignificant, and, save for the ruin resulting from natural causes, the walls on the land side must appear much the same as on that day in May, 1453, when Mohammed II. entered by the Adrianople Gate, to take possession of a Christian capital in the name of Allah and his Prophet.

One may still discern the breaches made by the monster gun of Orban, and may easily fancy that he can point out the spots where the firing was fiercest and most effective. There are numberless marks made by rams and catapults on walls still standing, and gaping openings that were doubtless effected by exploding mines.

The walls were pierced by numerous small apertures from which arrows, stones, and Greek fire could be showered upon attacking foes; and all these colossal defences — the bricks and stones of which are varied in tints of deep and solemn tones, with here and there a bit of golden yellow or a splash of red — are shrouded in luxurious, verdant curtains hanging over the bastions between the broken, riddled towers, while everywhere the friendly vines push in and out of every crevice. They remind one of funereal decorations — though on a gigantic

scale — softly covering these vestiges of a glory long since departed, as we are wont to cover, with the colour symbolic of hope, the monuments which mark the graves of human struggles and unfulfilled ambitions.

Wandering up and down before these remnants of the early centuries, one forgets one's own time, and lives for a brief moment in that when Christian emperors enthusiastically dreamed that this, their city, should be the New Rome in every sense, — the chief capital of the world and the chief home of Christianity. As one turns away, remembering the degradation and disintegration that is going on under the rule of Islam, one fervently exclaims, "How long, O Lord, how long!"

The gate called by the Turks Egri-Kapou — the crooked gate — was known as the Charsian, and is famous as that through which Justinian entered Constantinople in triumph. Here he was met by the Senate, and proceeded to the church of the Holy Apostles. Here, too, Alexius Comnenus passed when he came to take his place upon the throne. Near by is the Tower of Theophilus, which was enclosed in the wall of Heraclius about 640. Here also are the towers of Isaac Comnenus and of Amena. There is little doubt that Isaac Comnenus lived in the towers which he built. They are impressive and majestic in outline even now, more than seven centuries since their erection.

The Tower of Amena, so often mentioned in Byzantine annals, is still upright. In this prison many royal captives suffered horrible tortures, frequently being blinded and uncared for. The story of Andronicus in connection with this tower is a sinister romance. He was one of the Comneni, to whom allusion was made in the first part of this book. Possessed of great personal beauty, by temperate living, he preserved his health and vigour to old age. After many questionable and some absolutely trea-



sonable acts, he was imprisoned in the Amena, and there spent more than twelve years.

He one day perceived some broken bricks in a corner of his prison, and removing them found a passage, into which he retreated, and, having taken his provisions with him, closed the aperture, replacing the bricks as they had been before he removed them. His guards, finding his prison empty, reported his escape; and his wife, being suspected of his release, was herself confined in her husband's prison. Andronicus revealed himself to her; and soon after, with her aid, he did escape, but was retaken and again imprisoned, loaded with a double chain. At last he again obtained his freedom, and began his years of wandering in the East, where his adventures were so remarkable as to be almost beyond belief. He finally returned to seat himself upon the throne of Constantinople by a series of frightful crimes, and to be executed in the most brutal manner in less than two years after his accession.

It was in the prisons of the Amena that the young Alexius found his blinded father when he came to his rescue, escorted by the thousands of the Fourth Crusade; and during the imperial residence at the Palace of the Blachernæ — now entirely destroyed — the Amena was the scene of many hasty tragedies as well as of the lingering horrors to which we have referred.

The Charsian Gate is now almost buried beneath piles of stones, but its archway and opening can still be traced. The Greek historian Ducas mentions this gate in connection with the fall of the city in 1453:—

“ While all the Greeks, headed by the Emperor Constantine, were vigorously fighting to repulse the Turks, and turn the assault from a part of the walls which had crumbled under the war-engines, the will of God led the enemy to this gate, — generally closed, but opened by the emperor for the convenient

passage of his men,— at once discovered by the Turks, who, to the number of fifty, rushed in and, scaling the walls, planted the green flag on the nearest tower, and with loud cries shouted : ‘ Victory ! the city is ours ! ’ ”

In the eleventh century the Palace of Blachernæ was a most luxuriant and magnificent imperial residence. The Crusaders, with Peter the Hermit and with Godfrey de Bouillon, had trodden its halls, and there beheld such splendour as they had not dreamed of in their Western capitals. It was composed of many parts, erected at different periods, which, on its northeastern front, had a certain harmony of design. Its domes and variously shaped roofs gave an irregularity to its sky-line which added greatly to its picturesqueness. Its highest portion, the Tower of Isaac Angelus, was the most prominent feature of the city from any distant point of observation, and must have afforded a magnificent outlook to its occupant. Let us hope that, when blinded and imprisoned, the memory of these scenes beguiled some weary hours of their sharpest regrets.

“ ’T is better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all.”

The Greeks called the Blachernæ the “ Very High Residence,” and from its site one still has the wonderful outlook which centuries have not robbed of its beauties. Of the Tower of Isaac, Lew Wallace, in the “ Prince of India,” says : —

“ If he were weary of the city, there was the Marmora, always ready to reiterate the hues of the sky, and in it the Isles of the Princes, their verdurous shades permeated with dreamful welcome to the pleasure-seeker as well as the monk ; or if he longed for a further flight, old Asia made haste with enticing invitation to some of the villas strewing its littoral behind the Isles ; and yonder, to the eye fainting in the distance, scarce more than a

pale blue boundary cloud, the mountain beloved by the gods, whither they were wont to assemble at such times as they wished to learn how it fared with Ilium and the sons of Priam, or to enliven their immortality with loud symposia. . . . Sometimes, however, the superlative magnate preferred the balcony on the western side of the tower. There he could sit in the shade, cooled by waftures from a wide campania southward, or, peering over the balustrade, watch the peasantry fitting through the breaks of the Kosmidion, now the purlieu of Eyoub."

Near the site of the Blachernæ is a garden, in which is a small chapel, on the site of the ancient sanctuary of the Virgin of the Blachernæ. In this imperial chapel the emperor and his family, as well as the court, were wont to witness the splendid ceremonies of their Church; and here at certain seasons vigils were kept, when the emperor upon his knees, alone within the chapel, passed the night in prayer, while thousands of priests, monks, dervishes, and people knelt in the court, upon the terraces, and in the surroundings of the chapel, all telling their beads and repeating their prayers.

The sacred relics in this chapel were of inestimable and miraculous importance; for not only was the Holy Cross here which Heraclius had brought from Jerusalem, but it was also the repository of the *Himation* and the *Panagia Blachernitissa*, or All Holy Banner of the Image of the Virgin.

The *Himation*, or Robe of the Blessed Virgin, was brought to Constantinople from Jerusalem in the fifth century, and was believed to be weapon-proof and totally indestructible. With it the Virgin protected Byzantium. Ancient coins represented the Blessed Mother clothed in this miraculous garment, standing upon the altar, and with uplifted hands imploring her Son to protect her chosen city.

The *Panagia*, or Sacred Banner, in the reign of

Heraclius, had been borne along the walls, and had struck terror into the hearts of the besieging Avars and Persians, while from every loophole of the walls a shower of arrows fell among the infidels, carrying death to hundreds in their ranks. The Pagans fled as before a miracle, and their leaders declared that they had seen a woman in shining garments on the walls, whose gaze no man could meet and live.

When Michael Palæologus returned to Constantinople to put an end to the Latin occupation, he dismounted at the Golden Gate, and knelt before the image of the Virgin of the Blachernæ, which was then borne before him to the church of S. Sophia, thus signifying that the emperor was conducted by the Holy Mother of God. But, alas! the time came when even this Divine Patroness failed to protect her children. She did not save them from Mohammed II., though she was carried in procession, and entreated with prayers and tears. And yet, so great was their faith in her love and power that even after the city had fallen, thousands gathered in the church of the Divine Wisdom confidently reposed on the deliverance that had been predicted.

“The infidels will enter the city; but the instant they arrive at the column of Constantine the Great, an angel will descend from heaven, and put a sword in the hands of a man of low estate seated at the foot of the column, and order him to avenge the people of God with it. Overcome by sudden terror, the Turks will then take to flight, and be driven not only from the city, but to the frontier of Persia.”<sup>1</sup>

It adds an element of infinite pathos to that scene in Hagia Sofia, when the brazen gates were beaten down and the Turks rushed in, to remember that not only were the families gathered there torn from each other forever and

<sup>1</sup> Von Hammer.



led away to death and slavery, but the Virgin, on whom they had rested all their hopes, had also deserted them, and the faith that had upheld them when all else failed had proved a broken reed.

The Chapel of the Blachernæ covered a spring of pure water, and in its crypt, three times each year, the empress, wearing the *lentium*, or golden shirt, bathed in this sacred water, the pious act being accompanied by the prescribed ceremonies and prayers.

The Holy of Holies in which the sacred objects were deposited was of pure gold set with precious stones. The emperors alone could enter here; and each of them had added something to its treasures, striving to obtain for the Virgin of the Blachernæ the most holy relics in existence. Thus was the veneration for the chapel increased, when to the Himation and Panagia were added the nails and bits of the True Cross, skulls and other bones of Saints and Apostles, priceless manuscripts, and numberless exquisite reliquaries in silver and gold encrusted with gems of untold price, while precious stones unset and of great value were gathered in this treasury of the Holy Queen of Heaven, as in the vaults of earthly potentates.

Surely the Virgin of the Blachernæ was most powerful, and long processions of the great ones of the earth had sought her shrine. Clothed in regal splendour and bearing gifts, they bowed before her altar and sought her aid; for could she not miraculously deliver them from evil, and had not her Himation, when dipped in the sea, aroused a tempest before which the Muscovite enemies had fled and been engulfed in its waves?

Leaving the Charsian Gate, and following the walls on the land side, the Gate of Adrianople next presents itself. This was the principal scene of the fierce fight between Heraclius and the Avari in 625. It is a fine



square gate with a lofty arch flanked by two octagonal towers. It was valiantly defended against Mohammed II., who entered here after the conquest, which has since caused it to be used for the triumphal processions of the Moslems.

The Palace of Belisarius — sometimes called the Hebdomon — is near the Adrianople Gate. It was built and inhabited by Constantine the Great, and was loaned by Justinian to his renowned general. In view of the small number of ancient edifices remaining in Constantinople, this palace is of great interest. On a lofty hill, in the midst of a squalid district of Stamboul, stripped of its outer coverings, it is a melancholy spectacle. Still its dignity is most impressive, standing firmly as it does upon its colossal foundations, towering aloft in all its hideous nakedness, — an eternal reproach to those Latins who were as merciless in their destruction of the city of the Bosphorus as, perhaps more so than, the Moslems have been.

On the exterior there are bits of delicate carvings remaining between the lofty windows. They are exquisite in design, and in the rich golden hue which the sun and storm and heat of centuries have given them. The supports of balconies remain, from which the outlook must have been entrancing; and a portion of a tower is seen, said to be that in which the emperors showed themselves to the people. In short, there is much to study and to admire in this one example of the massive Byzantine architecture which remains in such a condition as to suggest what it may originally have been.

One must here recall the story of the great Belisarius, so fully given us by his faithful and admiring secretary, Procopius. It was from this palace, after the return of the great warrior from the conquest of Africa, that his triumphal procession took its way to the Hippodrome.

“The wealth of nations was displayed; the trophies of martial or effeminate luxury; rich armour, golden thrones, and the chariots of state which had been used by the Vandal queen; the massy furniture of the royal banquet, the splendour of precious stones, the elegant forms of statues and vases, the more substantial treasure of gold, and the holy vessels of the Jewish temple, which after their long peregrination were respectfully deposited in the Christian church of Jerusalem. A long train of the noblest Vandals reluctantly exposed their lofty stature and manly countenance. . . . Instead of ascending a triumphal car drawn by four horses or elephants, the modest conqueror marched on foot at the head of his brave companions: his prudence might decline an honour too conspicuous for a subject; and his magnanimity might justly disdain what had been so often sullied by the vilest of tyrants. The glorious procession entered the gate of the Hippodrome, was saluted by the acclamations of the senate and people, and halted before the throne where Justinian and Theodora were seated to receive the homage of the captive monarch and the victorious hero. They both performed the customary adoration, and, falling prostrate on the ground, respectfully touched the footstool of a prince who had not unsheathed his sword, and of a prostitute who had danced on the theatre: some gentle violence was used to bend the stubborn spirit of the grandson of Genseric; and however trained to servitude, the genius of Belisarius must have secretly rebelled. He was immediately declared consul for the ensuing year, and the day of his inauguration resembled the pomp of a second triumph; his curule chair was borne aloft on the shoulders of captive Vandals; and the spoils of war, gold cups, and rich girdles were profusely scattered among the populace.”<sup>1</sup>

The wonderful prowess of Belisarius and his new conquests in Italy and Sicily raised him to the very highest pinnacle of military glory; and the fullest honours and greatest riches that Justinian could lavish on him could

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

not requite his services nor properly express the obligation of the emperor to him. But suspicions of his general were poured like poison into the ear of Justinian, and Belisarius was suddenly recalled. He obeyed with alacrity; and the people absolutely worshipped him, as they might well do, not only on account of his military achievements, but as a chaste, sober, prudent, and modest man. We can picture him as Procopius presents him to us,—his lofty figure wrapped in his white mantle, passing in and out of his palace, followed by his guards, greeting every Byzantine, no matter how humble, with the courtesy which every great man can well afford, and in every direction realizing the exalted opinion which had been formed of his character.

But with the frailty of humanity Belisarius indulged a weakness which became an actual stain upon his honour. He loved and married Antonina, knowing her base origin and her unworthy life; and although she committed the most flagrant offences against his love and loyalty, of which he was perfectly aware, he still loved her with all her vices.

Returning from still another successful campaign in Persia, he was coldly received by the emperor and the base Theodora, who had been a lifelong friend of Antonina. Even the minds of the citizens had been turned against him, so that, as he passed alone and broken-hearted to his palace, he was insulted in the streets, and, reaching his home in despair, he threw himself down and wept, awaiting the death that he might reasonably anticipate at the hand of the cruel, shameless empress.

A scroll was soon brought him, in which he looked to see what manner of death he was to die. In great surprise he read his pardon in these words:—

“You cannot be ignorant how much you have deserved my displeasure. I am not insensible of the services of Antonina.

'To her merits and intercession I have granted your life, and permit you to retain a part of your treasures, which might be justly forfeited to the State. Let your gratitude where it is due be displayed, not in words, but in your future behaviour.'" <sup>1</sup>

With ignominious haste the hero forgot all but his mad love for his unworthy wife, and, flying to her, threw himself at her feet, protesting to her his love and devotion.

"At his departure from Constantinople, his friends, and even the public, were persuaded that as soon as he regained his freedom he would renounce his dissimulation; and that his wife, Theodora, and perhaps the emperor himself, would be sacrificed to the just revenge of a virtuous rebel. Their hopes were deceived; and the unconquerable patience and loyalty of Belisarius appear either *below* or *above* the character of a MAN." <sup>2</sup>

Again this magnificent soldier and contemptible lover took the field, and commanded the army in the Italian war; and after nearly twenty years, when the Bulgarians threatened the destruction of Constantinople, it was to this valiant and now aged general to whom Justinian turned for aid. He was not found wanting, and after his victory was received with joy by the people. But Justinian treated him coldly, and about two years later gave credit to accusations of treason against this much tried servant. The imprisonment of Belisarius is a dark stain on the record of Justinian's life; but happily the old hero was restored to freedom and honour before his death, and his innocence publicly declared.

"The name of Belisarius can never die; but, instead of the funeral, the monuments, the statues, so justly due to his memory, I only read that his treasures, the spoils of the Goths and Vandals, were immediately confiscated by the emperor. Some decent portion was reserved, however, for the use of his

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



widow ; and as Antonina had much to repent, she devoted the last remains of her life and fortune to the foundation of a convent. Such is the simple and genuine narrative of the fall of Belisarius, and the ingratitude of Justinian.”<sup>1</sup>

Another ancient palace was the Bucoleon, which was occupied by the Marquis of Montferrat after the Latin conquest. It was reached from the Hippodrome by descending the hillside, through lovely gardens shaded by luxuriant trees, in which were plashing fountains, vast porticoes, and beautiful statues, until on the seashore this palace was reached. Near it was a place of embarkation for the special use of the emperors. Here the frequent pleasure-parties embarked for various points on the Bosphorus or the lovely islands of the Propontis. The only existing remnants of this splendid structure are the pillars of a gate of a palace near the Chatladi Kapousi — Butcher’s Gate — and a bas-relief of a pair of lions, which are thought to indicate the site of the summer palace of Theodosius.

Returning to the Adrianople Gate and the objects of interest in its neighbourhood, there is, not far from the Palace of Belisarius, an ancient Byzantine church, now the mosque of Kahrieh Jamisi, formerly a part of the monastery of Chora, founded by Justinian, and rebuilt by Mary Ducas, whose daughter was the empress of Alexius Comnenus. Here are some fourteenth-century mosaics and frescoes. A part of them are veiled by the omnipresent Moslem whitewash, but those in the outer portions of the edifice are uncovered. The architecture of the church is interesting, and in the decorations the representations of the Life of Christ and the Virgin have a spirit and action not usual in works of their period.

There are in different quarters several Byzantine

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.



churches, now mosques, which are of interest to the antiquarian. Even the names of some of them are lost, and while there is little in them to attract the usual sight-seer, they do retain sufficient of their ancient characteristics to prove how numerous the churches must have been under the rule of the Greeks and Romans.

Resuming the walk by the walls, the Gate of Pempti, no longer open, is next seen; and soon after the river Lycus is crossed. Not far from this was the very centre of the battle between the army of Mohammed II. — a fierce array of wild tribes, Arabs, Tartars, Caucasians, and Africans, besides the trained Janissaries — and the troops of the last Constantine. The walls still offer emphatic testimony to the effect of the monster gun of Orbano in the colossal fragments of their masonry lying here as if but now thrown down.

The Gate of S. Romanus is more celebrated than all the others; for here the last Greek emperor, Constantine Palæologus Dragases, fell bravely meeting his fate, fighting to the end, and ever shouting, "For God and the Virgin!" until a fatal stroke stilled his voice forever.

As one advances, a curious effect is produced by the varying height of the walls. Now the entire city is hidden; again the tops of hundreds of graceful minarets are seen, and then suddenly a breach reveals gardens and houses, with the outline of more distant towers and other structures.

As the Curtain of Theodosius II. is reached, the masonry is far more perfect, and some long stretches are comparatively well preserved. Here, too, the towers are fine, and have the appearance of still being able to withstand stoutly an attack. A curious feature is the huts of peasants built on the platforms. They are so small and look so frail beside these Cyclopean walls that one looks for a wind to scatter them like deserted bird's-nests.

We pass the portal Mevlaneh, or Yeni Kapousi, near which is a monastery of dervishes and a cemetery, and reach another gate, which was formerly that of Selymbria, as the road to that city by Rhegium began here. The way was paved by Justinian, and some of the stones still remain. This gate is flanked by two eight-sided towers, and its small triple-arched bridge is of a lovely tawny colour.

Close by this gate is the convent of Balukli; and a monk is always at hand to conduct one to its miraculous fountain, and tell his fishy tale, which runs thus: On the day when Mohammed II. became the master of Constantinople, a Greek priest was tranquilly frying fish at Balukli, confident that the Crescent would never be permitted to overcome the Cross. When his fish were well browned on one side, a brother rushed in and breathlessly announced that the Moslem conqueror was even then in S. Sophia. To this the reverend cook replied, "Pooh! I could better believe that these fish will jump out of my boiling oil and swim upon the floor!" No sooner was this said than out jumped the fish, which may still be seen in the cistern of Balukli, red on one side and brown on the other, in praiseworthy remembrance of their escape when but half cooked. Doubtless, if they could speak it would be to repeat the familiar proverb, "It is an ill wind turns none to good."

At length we reach the Golden Gate, near the Castle of the Seven Towers, and the last on the land side. De Amicis thus describes the scene between Balukli and this spot:—

"And still on one side walls upon walls and towers upon towers, and on the other shady cemeteries, green fields and vineyards, a closed house or two, and beyond, the desert. The vegetation here is marvellous. Great leafy trees start from the towers as from gigantic vases; red and yellow blossoms and

garlands of ivy and honeysuckle hang from the battlements, and below grows an inextricable tangle of weeds and wild shrubs, from the midst of which spring plane-trees and willows shading the moat and the road. Large tracts of wall are completely covered with ivy, holding the stones together like a vast net, and hiding their wounds and fissures. . . . Flocks of birds nest in the walls; the air is full of the pungent fragrance of wild herbs; and a sort of spring-like joyousness seems to breathe from the ruins, that look as if they were decorated with flowers and garlands for the passage of a Sultana. Suddenly I felt upon my face a puff of salt air, and raising my eyes beheld the Sea of Marmora lying blue before me."

The famous triumphal Golden Gate is now walled up, and one discerns but some columns of a greenish tint, and two massive white towers. On the cornice are sculptured the Roman eagles and the Labarum of Constantine. Theodosius II. erected this gate in imitation of the Triumphal Gate of Rome, and after his time the Greek emperors entered here in triumphal processions and took their way to the church of S. Sophia. Here passed one potentate after another, in proud array, attended by the flower of his subjects and received by the fickle masses with enthusiastic cheers, perhaps to be soon deserted by all save his paid Varangians, those blond and blue-eyed giants of the North who made his firmest support in times of danger.

The cisterns of Constantinople are among its most interesting antiquities. Binbirdirek, or the Cistern of Constantine, is called the "Thousand and one Pillars," and is not far from the Burnt Column. In spite of its name it has but two hundred and twenty-four pillars, which are so arranged as to form aisles beneath the arches which rest on them. These columns are of white marble, with capitals executed in a semi-barbarous style to which it would be difficult to give a name. The mono-

gram of Constantine is seen upon the bricks which are built into the arches as well as into the shafts of some of the columns. It is said that the exposed pillars are the upper ones only, and that a still larger number are below, having never been excavated.

Let this be as it may, this subterranean edifice now appears like a pillared hall; and here Jews and Armenians are at work, twisting silk, beneath the columns. It is not easy to visit this hall of the silk-winders. The rickety steps are almost dangerous to strangers; and when there the atmosphere is far from agreeable, while the noise of the wheels and looms is deafening.

The Yeni Batan Seraï, or Underground Palace, has always been an interesting antiquity of Constantinople; and since it plays so romantic and important a part in the "Prince of India," the interest in it is much more general than before. It is the chief of the Byzantine cisterns. Built by Constantine and enlarged by Justinian, it has been in use constantly during more than fifteen and a half centuries, and those who have seen it tell us that it is admirably preserved. The water is abundant, and comes from unknown sources. It is now obtained by lowering buckets through openings in the roof. This roof is nearly perfect, and is a succession of vaults. It rests on three hundred and thirty-six pillars, some of them having Corinthian capitals, while others make no pretensions of this sort. I suppose that one may obtain permission to visit this watery palace, but it is not an easy thing to do even then. However, we are told that it is a marvellous sight; that the columns are white, and that when the light used affords a sufficient illumination, the whole scene is magical and enchanting.

It is easy to understand that to the superstitious Moslems this cistern is a place of horror, and there are many blood-curdling tales of crimes that have been hidden



in its waters, among its sepulchral corridors. Stories are told of those who have gone in boats to discover its size, some of whom have never returned, while others have come back half crazed, followed by fiendish laughter and unearthly sounds which echoed and re-echoed through the spacious vaults.

Hobhouse speaks of a cistern with eighty pillars on the third hill near the mosque of Laleli; but this is the only mention of it that has come under my observation, and no explorer of Constantinople has spoken of it to me. There are, however, remnants of several other cisterns. One near the Seven Towers has twenty-three columns remaining. The locations where others are thought to have existed by antiquarians are now occupied by gardens, and cannot be identified. Gautier has given a graphic account of his experience in visiting the cisterns.

“Spinning-wheels and winders buzz beneath the arches of Constantine, and the noise of looms imitates the rippling of the waters which have disappeared. There reigns in this subterranean region — half lighted and half buried in profound shadow — an icy coldness, which chills the visitor; and it is with a lively sensation of pleasure that he remounts, from the depths of this gulf, into the warm glow of the sunshine; pitying sincerely the poor workpeople, patiently pursuing their tasks, like gnomes or kobolds, in their cold and dreary cavern.”

Of the Yeni Batan Seraï he says: —

“Nothing could be more grim and sombre. The Turks believe that djinns, ghouls, and afrites hold their sabbath in these lugubrious regions; and there flap joyously their bat-like wings, damp with the drippings of the vault. Formerly it was customary to navigate, in a boat, this subterranean sea; and the voyage must have strangely resembled the crossing of the infernal stream under the guardianship of Charon. Some boats, drawn, doubtless, by the action of unknown currents, towards some gulf, never returned from this dark journey,



which is now, therefore, peremptorily interdicted; and which, even were it otherwise, I should not have had the slightest desire to undertake."

Parts of the aqueduct of Valens may still be seen. It brought water from the reservoirs of Belgrade, from which source the cisterns also were probably supplied. It connects the third and fourth hills, and is still of use by means of pipes laid on its summits. Its double row of forty Gothic arches is most picturesque, and almost startling in the midst of surroundings so out of keeping with the period and the art which it represents; for it is in that densely populated portion of Constantinople known as the horse-market quarters. Vines are clinging to it, and make here, as elsewhere, that charming effect for which one is especially grateful when they conceal at once the decay of the past and the disagreeables of the present.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SHOPS AND BAZAARS.

**I**N many portions of Constantinople, notably in Pera, the appearance of the shops has very much changed within the last three decades, and there are now entire business blocks, much like those seen in large cities the world over; but many of the old-time Oriental cubby-holes, which answer the purpose of shops, still remain. They are a sort of stall or alcove, into which the purchaser never enters. The shopkeeper sits in the front of this little box, or sometimes even outside it, cross-legged, on an old rug or bit of matting, and has no apparent interest in his customers nor in selling his wares.

The shopper stands in the street, and if by peering into the little stall he discovers what he wishes, the merchant will very deliberately take it down; but he will not evince the smallest anxiety to sell it, and the thought of advantageously displaying his goods is one that he has not grasped, and would probably scorn if it were made clear to him. It will be understood that I am speaking especially of the Mohammedans. The Jews, Franks, and other nations are the same in Turkey that they are elsewhere.

The Turkish shopkeepers smoke continually, and indeed all Turks smoke intemperately. Consequently the pipe and tobacco shops are very numerous, and have some most attractive goods. The amber mouthpieces and the cherry-wood and jasmine stems are really beautiful; and it is interesting to watch the operation of boring these



*Street Scene.*







stems, which may frequently be seen in progress in the bits of shops.

Turkish gentlemen make valuable collections of pipes and mouthpieces. Some of these are set with precious stones, and are frequently mounted in gold and fine enamels; in fact, a good collection of pipes is as much an indication of wealth as a fast yacht or fine horses would be elsewhere, and it is not unusual for a wealthy Turk to invest from fifty to a hundred thousand dollars in these wares.

The shops of Constantinople are far less interesting than the bazaars, which have frequently been described in the most fascinating manner, and I have read no description of them that seemed to me to exaggerate their interest.

The Grand Bazaar, called Bezestín, is in fact a town by itself. Its streets vary in width from those of sufficiently ample dimensions, with squares and fountains, to the merest lanes or passages. It is a perfect labyrinth of streets within an irregularly shaped edifice, overarched and lighted by numberless small cupolas. No sunlight penetrates here; and the dim, hazy light adds a semi-poetical effect to the bazaar, to the crowds within it, to the women and children attended by eunuchs and slaves, to the goods to be sold, to the whole experience; and one even feels like pinching one's self to make sure that he is quite the same as the commonplace being who has gone to do his shopping in the commonplace shops of other cities.

Each street resembles the nave of a church, arched overhead with black and white stones, and finished with arabesque-like decorations. In some parts of the bazaar horses, camels, and carriages are seen, and there is an air of confusion in the crowds of people passing and repassing. In other portions it is very quiet, as the

noise of the city is entirely shut out, and save for a gentle murmur of pleasant voices it is calm and still.

There are numerous little bazaars within the one grand bazaar, and each one is devoted to a special kind of goods. If one buys nothing, there is not a place in Constantinople where he could be better amused, or where time slips away more imperceptibly. The bazaar is, in fact, a far more entertaining museum than many with which one meets in travelling, and few comedies or light operas afford more amusement than one can find in watching the people who are moving about him. Behind and above the small shops there are frequently larger apartments filled with a choicer selection of goods than are seen on the street, and in one part of the bazaar or another may be found all the products of the Orient, and many of the Western World.

It is a wise method for the stranger to go more than once to study this curious place before he goes to make purchases; for these sleepy, dead-and-alive seeming merchants have a very clear and arithmetical brain behind their soft, dull eyes, and one needs to concentrate his thought on his bargain when dealing with them.

In the bazaar of perfumes one is almost intoxicated with the mixture of delicious odours. Jasmine, attar of roses, bergamot, sandalwood, and odoriferous gums unite to make an atmosphere of which one has not dreamed; and one recalls that perfumes were one of the three best beloved of all earthly joys by the Prophet, women and children alone preceding them in his esteem. How human this makes him seem!

This bazaar is much affected by the Turkish women, who here purchase the numberless cosmetics with which they endeavour to enhance the beauty which Nature has bestowed on them, — *kohl* for eyelashes and brows, henna for the fingers, and an endless variety of soaps, powders,

perfumed waters and pomades, and all put up in the most luxurious manner, — in velvet cases heavily embroidered, and in little boxes and flasks that are entrancing. Here too are combs, hand mirrors, rosaries, and the like, of rare and costly as well as of less expensive materials. It is not strange that the ladies in their *yashmaks* and *feridjé*-like cloaks linger here longer than the eunuchs think it necessary; and it is wonderful to see with what utter indifference the merchant permits them to upset all the wares in his shop.

One of the most fascinating bazaars to both men and women is that of weapons. These are in one of the larger shops, reached by ascending two or more flights of steps. The merchants in the more spacious and serious shops conduct their affairs with such dignity and leisurely elegance that one should never visit them when in haste; and if one will adapt himself to the consciousness of being master of all the time there is, he will find the bazaars most enjoyable, and the opening ceremony delightful. This consists of taking a thimbleful of delicious coffee from the most delicate of cups set in a holder of filigree silver or gold, followed by a cigarette or a few puffs from a narghile.

The weapons here are simply marvellous, with their curious shape, exquisite temper and sharpness, and the magnificence and intrinsic value of their jewels. They have *repoussé* and chased silver sheaths and scabbards, which are again enclosed in exquisite velvet covers embroidered in pure gold or silver thread. The handles are encrusted with turquoise, coral, garnets, and other more precious stones, and these are intertwined with texts from the Koran laid in with gold letters. There are also exquisitely carved ivory, sandalwood, and mother-of-pearl mountings to these priceless blades.

There are yataghans, poniards, scimitars, wicked-

looking sheath knives, Damascus blades, and many curiously shaped daggers, all laid on low tables in the centre of the apartment, while the walls are hung with helmets, casques, shields, coats of mail, and all kinds of armour known from the days of the Israelitish battles to the present time.

Suddenly, while you are speaking to the Moslem merchant, he leaves you, sinks on his knees, touches the floor with his forehead, and with his face carefully turned towards Mecca, recites his prayers with as much devotion as if he were in a temple and no other human being existed, — as if Allah and he alone filled the universe.

The variety of goods to be found in the Grand Bazaar and the beauty of them could be endlessly described. There is an equal or even larger quantity of ordinary objects; and one turns from the exquisite fabrics and colouring produced by Oriental looms and hands to experience a sickening disgust at the crude productions of the West, with their abominable designs and worse tints.

But one may revel for days in the midst of Tunisian scarfs, Persian rugs and shawls, exquisite embroideries from the cities of the East and the mountains of Syria; tables and stools richly inlaid; a multitude of small objects in gold, silver, ivory, pearl, and tortoise shell; ancient porcelains and exquisite brasses; Broussa silks that glisten like icicles in the sun, and are as delicate and elusive in their colours; fans of an endless variety; chaplets of pearl, ivory, spicy woods, and precious beads; and a collection of exquisitely fashioned articles for which I know no name. Truly, in these bazaars the meaning of "the wealth of Ind" dawns upon one as it rarely can elsewhere.

The bazaar of the gold and silver wire drawers is a fascinating spot. Here are made the threads for the embroidery that does not tarnish, as well as the magnifi-



cent and costly cords and braids which are lavished on some of the Turkish uniforms and costumes worn on state occasions. The Turkish method of holding the work with the great toe, or of passing a cord around it, is curious; and one can watch these wire drawers a long time with interest.

It would be difficult to draw a picture of the "Bazaar of Arms" which would exceed the truth. It is the most fascinating of museums, for it never seemed to me like a place of merchandise. There are costumes and arms that might well have answered to the needs of Timour, Genghis Khan, the great Akbar, Saladin, Richard Cœur de Lion, or the Prince of Magicians himself. There too are the housings for their steeds as well, stiff with embroidery of silver and gold, and actually blazing with jewels, diamonds, and other dazzling gems. It is a comfort to know that even the fatalist and indifferent Moslems have such an appreciation of the value of the objects gathered here that it is forbidden to smoke in this bazaar. This may be the reason why it is closed at noon, and the merchants who own it retire to their homes to forget everything save the pleasures permitted to the faithful followers of the Prophet.

The fine jewellers' bazaar contains an incredible value in precious stones. The Turks not only love them, but esteem them as good investments. It is easy to carry a large fortune in one's pocket, and to realize money on a fine jewel at any time. Banks and stocks are an abomination to an orthodox Mohammedan, and small wonder that it is so if one considers the history of Turkish finance!

The jewels one sees here are of amazing richness, but the settings are clumsy and inartistic. They make, however, great numbers of necklaces, bracelets, anklets, earrings, and an immense variety of ornaments for the head. Crescents, stars, and flowers are favourite designs, not

only in jewellery, but in everything that can be called ornamental in Turkish products. But the jeweller's bazaar is not attractive to look at, as the rare and brilliant gems are hidden away in wooden boxes, and these enclosed in wire nettings; and nothing of beauty is to be seen unless one wishes to buy, when the diamonds, rubies, pearls, sapphires, and emeralds that can be produced are simply incredible, and one could easily spend a million and leave many most desirable gems behind, in a shop that on his entrance had no appearance of being a mine of treasures.

The shoe bazaar is curious and amusing, and, oddly enough, it is a very decorative bazaar. It has a double row of shops; and when standing at one end and looking through it, the eye does not distinguish the precise outline of any special slipper, but the whole effect is that of a brilliant hall. There are innumerable slippers of all colours and of curiously ingenious styles. They are lavishly ornamented with filigree work and jewels, and are made in kid, velvet, satin, and even fur. There are spangles and swan's down, and arabesques and flowers in gold and silver, and exquisite embroidery in pearls.

These slippers are so tiny that they would make the despair of even our own young girls, with their delicate and well-formed feet; but it is well to bring some of them away for ornament. With the addition of a silken bag drawn with dainty ribbons they make charming bon-bonnnières; and with no change they are pretty depositories on a table or dressing-case for the numerous useless nothings that will accumulate in these days.

Perhaps, after all, the human beings who keep the shops of the bazaar are the most remarkable objects in it. In Paris, London, New York, and elsewhere we can find goods of all kinds and from all lands, — not massed, as here, but as choice and desirable, — with a reasonable

search, and when found they can be bought in half the time that is required in Constantinople; but nowhere else can one see such an assemblage of men as are here telling their beads, *drinking* their narghiles, as they express it, reading the Koran, or sitting as motionless as the great Sphinx.

“ Every one of them is odd and picturesque in his own way ; every shop door is the frame of a picture full of colour and fancy, that fills the mind with stories of adventure and romance. That thin, bronzed man with the bold features is an Arab, who himself drove from his own distant country his camels laden with gems and alabaster, and has more than once heard the whistle of the bullets of the desert robbers. This other, in the yellow turban and with a lordly bearing, has crossed on horseback the solitudes of Syria, bringing silk from Tyre and Sidon. This black statue with his head wrapped in an old Persian shawl, and his forehead seamed with scars made by the necromancers to save him from death, who holds his head so high, as if he still beheld the Colossus of Thebes and the tops of the Pyramids, has come from Nubia. That handsome Moor with pallid face and deep black eyes, wrapped in a snow-white mantle, has brought his carpets from the uttermost western spur of the chain of Atlas. The Turk in the green turban with the attenuated visage has but just returned from the great pilgrimage, where he has seen his friends die of thirst in the interminable plains of Asia Minor, and, arriving at Mecca almost dead, dragged himself seven times around the Kaaba, and fell fainting as he covered the Black Stone with ardent kisses. The giant with a white face, arched eyebrows, and fiery eyes, who looks more like a warrior than a merchant, and whose whole being is full of pride and ambition, has brought his furs from the northern regions of the Caucasus, where in his younger days he has struck many a Cossack’s head from his shoulders ; and this poor wool-merchant, with his flat face and small oblique eyes, muscular and hard as an athlete, it is not long since he said his prayer under the shadow of the immense dome that surmounts the

sepulchre of Timour; he started from Samarkand, crossed the deserts of Bulgaria, passed through herds of Turkomans, crossed the Dead Sea, escaped the bullets of the Circassians, gave thanks to Allah in the mosque of Trebizond, and came to seek his fortune at Stamboul, whence he will return, an old man, to his beloved Tartary, which he ever holds in his heart."<sup>1</sup>

There are many bazaars of which I have not spoken, having mentioned those only which especially interest me, and are kept by Mohammedan merchants. Naturally, all kinds of ordinary merchandise can be found here, suited to the needs of the poorer classes; and in the old-clothes bazaar the most wretched beings can secure a covering of some sort. Those who have been properly instructed in the germ theory would hesitate to examine this bazaar too closely, but *en passant* we may say that even such a shop in an Oriental country differs widely from those to which we are accustomed. With its Bedouin cloaks, dervishes' tunics, caftans, turbans, and remnants of rich shawls, it makes a picture which reminds one of some delightful canvases of Goya and Rembrandt, and other gifted painters, who give us the most realistic representations of objects, not always agreeable, but surrounded with an atmosphere that is deliciously poetic, and makes a subject that one does not care for absolutely appeal to his æsthetic sense.

And alas! there is a class of merchants in the bazaar much to be dreaded, as well as the middle-men, who are as disagreeable, exasperating, and tormenting as it is possible for human beings to be. They are noisy, artful, obstinate, and determined to make you buy what you do not want, and pay their price for it. They flatter you, lie to you, and cheat you if possible. They do not seem to belong to any one race of beings, but to be made up of

<sup>1</sup> De Amicis.



the dregs of various races. They have been everywhere and speak all languages; they combine to cheat you, and wink and make signs to each other continually. If, as we hear, there are schools in the Orient where Black Arts are taught, these men ought to have diplomas from them; for they carry their cheating to so nice and delicate a point that, in its way, it merits the title of a Fine Art.

I am told that there are portions of the bazaar to which strangers cannot penetrate without a guide. But why should one wish to go there, — where the goods are inferior, a sort of hodgepodge of good, bad, and indifferent, and kept by rascals who can almost make one believe that from pure sentiments of friendship they will confer on him treasures worth a fortune in exchange for the few napoleons he carries in his purse?

Such is the Great Bazaar in the very heart of Stamboul, a city within a city, always crowded by day and deserted by night. Full of wonders and treasures, it imprints itself indelibly upon the Western mind; and the remembrance of the hours spent there makes one feel as if he had seen the Palace of the Khaleefeh, and the thirty-eight thousand pieces of tapestry of gold-embroidered silk brocade, and the twenty-two thousand magnificent carpets, which El-Muktedir displayed to the ambassadors of Constantine IX.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE VALLEY OF THE SWEET WATERS. — HABITS AND CUSTOMS OF TURKISH LADIES.

ONE should not fail to go to the Valley of the Sweet Waters on Friday afternoon. Writing this line brings clearly before me the scene of perfect enchantment that I beheld on my first visit there.

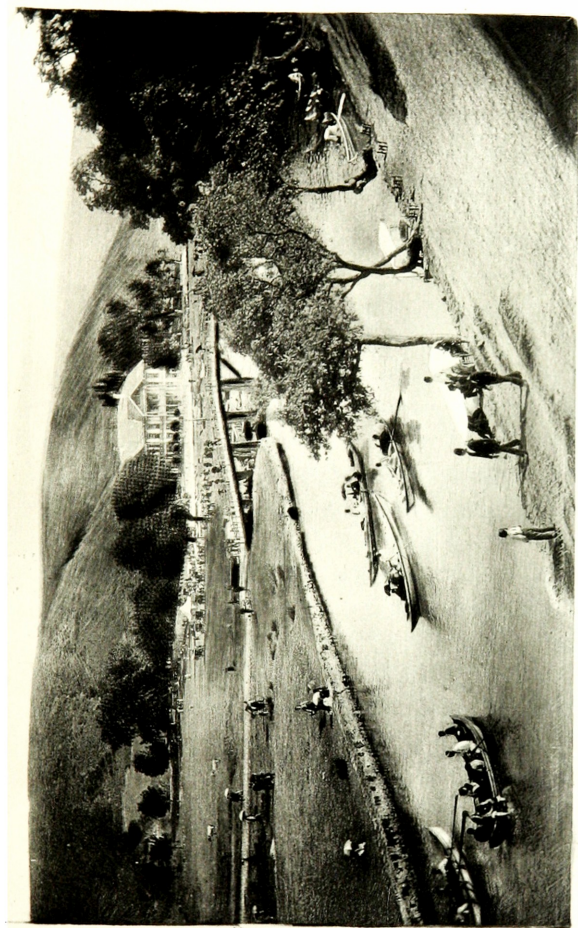
The Golden Horn and the Sweet Waters were literally covered with caiques filled with women and children on their way to the charming valleys, where they are wont to congregate on the afternoon of their Sunday. The caiques were so frail, and showed so little above the water, that to one standing above and looking down on them their passengers had the appearance of sitting on the water and gliding over it as swans might do.

The dazzlingly white veils of the Turkish women are the most exquisitely becoming head-wear that can be imagined. They enhance the effect of brilliant complexions and soft, deep eyes, without concealing anything except the little artificialities which help to make these women so attractive. Would it not be well for ladies of other climes who rouge and powder, who outline their eyes and deepen their eyebrows, to tone down the crude effect of all this by adopting the *yashmak*?

The *feridjés* which were formerly worn — and should never have been given up — were of the most delicate shades of blue, green, rose, mauve, and yellow; and a group of women was like a lovely bouquet in colour. Turkish women do not walk well, as a rule; neither does



*Sweet Waters on Friday Afternoon.*







their dress give them what in other countries is called "a good figure;" and it follows that it is becoming to them to sit down. Thus they look their best in a caïque or seated on their rugs, as they are often seen when on pleasure excursions or picnics, of which they are very fond.

The Koran says that a woman's veil shall be "a sign of her virtue and a guard against the talk of the world." That thought is now a part of ancient history, so far as the women of Constantinople are concerned; for one only needs to look at them to perceive that in the arrangement of the *yashmak* their first, last, and only intention is to make it as becoming as possible, and to display their good looks to the very best advantage.

The *yashmak* consists of two parts. One is bound about the head, covers the forehead to the eyebrows, and is tied at the back of the neck; the other covers the lower part of the face up to the eyes, and the two are so folded together that they seem to be but one. The Koran probably contemplated veils of some thickness; but the ladies of Constantinople wear the filmiest of gauze, and put them on so loosely that they are no inconvenience in any way. The only exception to this that I have observed is in the case of women who are no longer young, whom the Koran would permit to leave a portion of the face uncovered; but they do not apparently rely upon the good book for their fashions any more closely than do their daughters and granddaughters, for as years steal on they use less transparent veils, and close them more carefully. We constantly hear the legend repeated that the Turk does not see his bride's face until the wedding night; and visitors to Constantinople frequently question the truth of this statement, forgetting that the women seen by them are all much too elderly to be unmarried, or even newly married, in a country where girls are married at eleven and twelve years of age.

On the subject of the *yashmak*, much may be said. The skill with which the veils are handled is admirable; they are shaped like turbans, or twisted into coronets, or given an indescribable cloudlike lightness to suit the especial face of the wearer. They disclose and they conceal enough to provoke curiosity; and frequently, I fear, they promise more than could be realized were the *yashmak* thrown off. In no case is the truth revealed; and a well-trained eye is needed to form an approximate judgment as to what the lady is really like, so many are the artificial methods used. Turkish women apply a white paste to the face, put a circle, of *kohl*, around the eyes, darken the eyebrows, and impart a desired tint to the eyelids. They sometimes resort to patches, and in fact are perfectly acquainted with all feminine methods of "making up." The young women have long throats, oval faces, dimples in chin and cheeks, and full lips, which are made more pronounced with carmine; but their tendency is to grow stout with advancing years.

The caiques of which we spoke some time ago have had time to reach the smiling valley of the Sweet Waters, where the slaves will spread generous rugs and mattings for each party, and the ladies will seat themselves in groups beneath the spreading nut-trees, planes, and sycamores, and chatter, eat, and smoke the afternoon away, while the children play games, and the slaves and eunuchs watch every motion and satisfy every demand. In many such groups one probably sees four generations of a family, and sometimes even more than that number.

Fruit, coffee, and sherbet merchants are always *en évidence* at the Sweet Waters. A variety of instruments are played by the musicians. Dancers and other entertainers pass here and there, ready to display their skill for a few piastres. There is a murmur of voices, a sound of laughter, the music of flutes, and with it all a sense of

unreality and dreaminess, as if we were beholding charming visions in our sleep, or looking upon a stage where the curtain might be rung down at any moment; and if it were, one would certainly applaud enthusiastically.

All Turkish ladies should go to the Sweet Waters in caiques; but truth compels me to say that occasionally some *grande dame* arrives in a splendid carriage, is conducted to an unusually luxurious carpet, and attended by five times as many servants as she can possibly require. In the distance a few Turks are seen, both young and old. They walk, or ride on fine horses with splendid trappings. If they approach the groups of ladies, no interchange of smiles or of familiar glances can be detected; but, curiously enough, if a Frank comes near, these ladies frequently reward him with a smile, and have the air of ingenuously saying, "Stranger, I am pleased with you."

Such was the scene at the Sweet Waters long years ago; but now, while the *yashmaks* are numerous, other kinds of head-gear are also worn. The *feridjés* have given way to cloaks, mostly black; the caiques are fewer, and the carriages are in greater numbers; in short, my last afternoon there was largely spent in regretting that all the world over one human being seems to be striving to resemble every other human being as far as dress can produce that result. Much of the picturesqueness and air of romance that once pervaded Constantinople is lost; and the afternoon at the Sweet Waters, that once seemed like a gala day in Mohammed's Paradise, now resembles a collection of picnic parties in the Prater of Vienna or the Bois de Boulogne.

The Turkish ladies go about with a freedom that ought to be sufficient for those of any nation. They shop in Pera and in the Mussulman quarters. They row about in caiques and visit their friends. On Tuesdays they assemble in the cemetery of Scutari. On other days they

go to Therapia, the Islands, or to the Sweet Waters of Asia. They make their devotions in the mosques or at the tombs of the Sultans. They witness the exhibitions of the dervishes, and they do all these things with a will and an air of extreme enjoyment such as Christian women rarely show. Query, does it make one enthusiastic to live in a harem and see but one man? It would seem that freedom in the outside world has the effect of champagne on these otherwise cloistered women, and they have the merry air of children who have run away and quite believe that "stolen fruit is the sweetest."

Having watched the Turkish women in public, one is curious to know something of their home life, and is pleased to find at the beginning of the inquiry that fresh air, pure water, and sunshine are indispensable to the Turk. For these reasons the Moslem quarter is almost invariably on high ground, while the spacious houses have gardens, and frequently fountains in their midst.

Turkish houses are divided into the larger *haremlik*, or quarters for the women; the smaller *selamlık*, or quarters for the men, for the reception of strangers and other hospitalities, and for the transaction of business. Between these two there is a neutral ground, the *mabeyn*, from which a passage leads to the *haremlik*. The stables, too, are always near at hand.

A large hall makes the entrance to the harem, around which are sleeping-rooms for the slaves, and other useful apartments, in one of which, almost without exception, there is an old woman with a brazier, by means of which she makes the coffee, so industriously imbibed by Turks and their guests. The broad staircases and the floors are kept very clean, as well as the apartments, which are scantily furnished. A hard divan on two or three sides of a room, with small square mattresses in the corners piled with cushions, is an average of the amount of furnish-



ing in the usual Turkish apartment; and even a fine reception-room has but a small European sofa, a few chairs, a mirror supported by a console, some candlesticks, and a table to hold the necessities for smoking.

Bedsteads are not used, and the mattresses are taken from the floor in the morning and packed into closets made for this purpose. The walls are usually white-washed and unadorned. The windows are innumerable, and make the houses both ugly and uncomfortable; for while they are always latticed in the harem, they are not well draped, and admit the burning heat of the sun in the warm season and the cold winds in the winter. The means for lighting and heating are also crude and insufficient. A couple of candles or a petroleum lamp furnish light to the apartment, while the passages are dark. Various kinds of braziers furnish but little heat, and in cold weather one can imagine that the curious *tandour* must have been very desirable. This is a square table having a footboard covered with metal, on which a brazier is placed. A sofa runs around it, and a heavy quilted counterpane being thrown over all is pulled close up under the chins of the persons beneath it, so that the first impression is that of a company of people tucked up in bed. These *tandours* are gradually falling into disuse, but still exist in goodly numbers.

From what has been said concerning the palaces and villas of Europeanized Turks, it will be understood that I am now speaking of the houses of Turks who are not poor, but are not in any sense denationalized, of which large numbers exist in town and country.

Perhaps the bath is the best-made and best-furnished part of a Turk's house. It consists of three rooms, and is thus described in a book called "The People of Turkey," written by a lady who long resided in that country:—



“The first room — the *hammam* — is a square apartment, chiefly constructed of marble, and terminating in a kind of cupola studded with a number of glass bells, through which the light enters. A deep reservoir, attached to the outer wall, with an opening into the bath, contains the water, half of which is heated by a furnace built under it. A number of pipes attached to the furnace circulate through the walls of the bath, and throw great heat into it. One or two graceful fountains conduct the water from the reservoir, and on each side of the fountain is a low wooden platform which serves as a seat for the bather, who sits cross-legged, and undergoes a long and complicated process of washing and scrubbing, with a variety of other toilet arrangements too numerous to mention. The second room, called the *saouklouk*, is constructed very much in the same style as the first, but is smaller, and has no furniture but a marble platform, upon which mattresses and cushions are placed for the use of those who wish to repose between intervals of bathing, or do not wish to face the cooler temperature of the *hammam oda*. This room is furnished with sofas, on which the bathers rest and dress after quitting the bath.”

Every Turk is dependent on his bath, and the poorest houses have an arrangement which answers its purpose. But the Turkish ladies spend much time in the bath-room. They smoke, eat fruit and sherbets, and repose for hours on the sofas of the bath. Even this does not suffice, as they must go at least once each month to the public *hammam*, where they meet their friends and learn the gossip of the day. These public baths are very numerous, and sometimes extremely elegant and luxurious.

A Turkish lady is completely mistress of her time, and begins her day with coffee and a cigarette. She will then have her bath, and probably after that spend some time with her husband, always treating him with ceremonious respect, and herself serving him with pipe and

coffee, while numbers of slaves stand about idle. The children pay their father a visit, and are always given money for sweets; and not until the *effendi* leaves the *haremlik*, does any work of the day begin.

Until recently the lady of the house joined her slaves in all the household occupations; but now new tastes have led in other directions, and these ladies study music, languages, embroidery, and other feminine accomplishments.

If one of these ladies wishes to go out, she must have her husband's permission; and when she is to be seen in public, the toilette requires much time, as all the processes that I have suggested for beautifying herself demand a deal of thought and care before the *yashmak* and *feridjé* can be adjusted. She is careful to return before sunset, as the husband usually visits the harem before his dinner; and after that, over coffee and cigarettes, all the experiences of the day are discussed.

If a lady is not going out, she has no fixed hour for dressing. If she is vain, it will probably be before the midday meal; but if she loves her ease, she will defer her toilette until evening.

The *négligé* costume of a Turkish lady is attractive, consisting of a long white dressing-gown, and a graceful head-dress above her flowing hair, while her bare feet are tucked into some fascinating slippers. The more ceremonious costume is the long open gown of silk or cloth, embroidered in bouquets of flowers. Underneath this is a delicate gauze shirt with large flowing sleeves, which is disclosed about the neck and breast, while a richly embroidered jacket is worn over the gown, and a flat cap covered with pearls and precious stones is placed jauntily on one side of the head. Exquisitely ornamented slippers complete this graceful and fascinating costume.

But, alas! a fancy for European dress has penetrated

even the most carefully guarded harems, and the bad taste manifested in the curious medley of garments and colours that are worn would be ludicrous were it not pathetic. One of these manifestations took the form of a yellow cotton gown made *à la princesse*, with a blue bodice over it belted with a gold band. With this was worn a quantity of modern coral ornaments, and a scarlet turban loaded down with diamonds and other precious stones. This was the dress of an attractive Turkish lady, who wore it with an air of self-gratulation that she was able to be dressed so perfectly *à la mode*.

One cannot so seriously regret some of the changes that have been made in the methods of taking food. No one can object to the thumb and finger being retired from the active service of conveying food to the mouth, and that office being filled by a fork; and certainly a table and chairs are far more comfortable and proper than is a large tray filled with edibles and deposited on the floor. The two meals of the Turks are served at ten or eleven in the morning and at sunset. Their food is simple, not highly spiced, and sweets are served between the courses. Water is the only drink permitted in the *haremlık*, besides coffee, which is taken with cigarettes at the end of the meal. A curious old custom, still observed, requires that while the coffee is served all the slaves and attendants shall enter the room and stand at one end with folded arms.

Turks are hospitable, and offer to visitors not only coffee, but *tatlon*, a rich preserve, which is brought in early when a visit is made. It is made of fruits, but more frequently of roses, lilies, violets, and other sweet flowers. The service used for this delicacy is often very costly, and it is presented by a kneeling slave. The coffee service is also rich, sometimes worth a fortune, and the cloths which cover the salvers are heavy with pure gold embroidery. On some occasions these services are extremely



*A Turkish Lady.*







simple; but that occurs when the entertainment is outside the harem.

When the visitor shows signs of leaving, or when the hostess wishes the visit to end, sherbet is served, followed by coffee; and it is understood that this is the parting ceremony, no matter by whom introduced. What a boon it would often be to have a dismissal ceremony that should be recognized as a perfectly courteous method of ending a visit which was becoming tiresome to either visitor or host!

## CHAPTER XV.

### CEMETERIES AND FUNERAL CUSTOMS.

THE cemeteries of Constantinople are so situated, and so much used as pleasure-grounds by the people, that there is little of melancholy or sadness connected with them. It is difficult for the Christian to accept this view of a burial-place, but it is distinctly that of the Moslem; and the cypress-tree, which is so numerous in the cemeteries, does not stand as the symbol of death and grief in this land, where it is the ornament of the garden as well as of the city of the dead, and the guardian of the fountain as of the tomb. We have already spoken of the cemetery of Ayooob, which in its unrivalled position and its arrangement has the effect of a garden rather than of a burial-ground.

The cemetery of Pera soon becomes familiar to foreigners, who, living as they usually do on the heights of this quarter, pass and repass it continually. It might very well be described as a cypress grove descending a somewhat steep hill, with curious little stone and marble columns scattered through it. Some of these columns are crowned with turbans. From others the tops have fallen and lie on the ground. Here and there the columns are pointed at the top; many lean at different angles, while others have toppled quite over. Each grave has sometime had a stone at each end, carefully provided as seats for the two angels who are expected to come to judge the souls of those whose bodies repose here. Occasionally there is an enclosure protected by a barrier of

some kind, a low wall or fence. These are the burial-places of families of importance, and usually have a large column with a turban in the centre, while smaller columns cluster around it; and the arrangement of the folds in the turban reveals to the Turk the dignity and importance of the man who lies beneath.

This cemetery is called the *Petit Champ des Morts*; but the Field of the Living would seem to be a more appropriate name for it. Here Turks smoke, and cows feed. Children play here, while hundreds of doves are softly cooing, and many who pass up and down the hill find it a convenient resting-place. If the stone on which one sits is favourably located, he has glimpses of the Golden Horn between the trees, while the procession of veiled women, and men of various nations who move up and down the hill, distract the attention; and in fact there is so much of life to observe that it does not occur to one to reflect on things past and things to come, as one naturally does in a cemetery elsewhere.

To be quite frank, this burial-place is totally uncared for, and in some parts of it there are usually a goodly number of dogs taking their naps and preparing for their nightly howl. One can but pity these animals, who belong to nobody and have no homes; for as the Koran declares them to be unclean, no Turk will own a dog or give him a shelter. Yet Turks often bequeath sums in their wills for the support of dogs, and they are fed on Fridays, not only at the Bayezideh, but by benevolent Turks at other places. The Sultan Abdul Medjid once exiled the dogs on the Island of Marmora; but their services as scavengers were sadly missed, and the people were so much excited on the subject that the Sultan permitted them to be brought back to the city, where they were received with a sincere welcome.

Galata, lying below Pera, is a bustling and busy, but



not an interesting, quarter to the traveller who wishes to observe Oriental peoples and customs, for here are assembled the commercial elements of all countries. All Continental languages are here spoken; and here are the Custom House, the Exchange, the offices of steamships, and various other features which render it a quarter to be visited only from necessity.

But above its disagreeables, not far from the cemetery of Pera, rises the stately Tower of Galata, which, with the Palazzo del Podestà, constitutes what may be termed the remnants of the Genoese rule in the Galata of the past. This proud people, who had been here from an early period, escaped the massacre of Mohammed II.; and although that conqueror rebuilt their tower, and other Sultans have restored it, the entire world associates it with the Genoese. They built a tower on the line of the wall which divided Galata from Pera, and for centuries they held this fortress against all enemies, while the standard of their Republic proudly waved from its summit.

The tower is round and lofty, of a dark colour, having a conical copper-covered roof, beneath which are windows so near each other that the apartment within is like a glazed gallery or observatory,— which in fact it is, since here are watchmen both day and night, whose office it is to detect the very first indication of any fire that occurs within the wide range of their vision.

One cause of a certain carelessness as to the conditions in the *Petit Champ des Morts* may be found in the fact that a large proportion of the graves here are said to be those of the Janissaries. No one regrets that they are safely buried, or cares to do them honour.

The odour of the cypress is believed to be an antidote to all pestilential vapours; and as each person buried has a separate grave and tree, it naturally results that cypress



*The Tower of Galata*







groves abound in Constantinople and its vicinity. The central position of the Pera Cemetery, and the close proximity of some of the principal tombs of Stamboul to the very busiest of its streets, seem incongruous to us; but where life is counted as so unimportant as with the Mohammedans, death is viewed with an indifference that we do not comprehend.

Thus the tomb of Mahmoud is close to the Street of the Divan; and the burial-place of this great Sultan echoes with the noise of traffic, the cries of children, and the rumble of the tramcar, as well as the unending tramp of horses.

The great cemetery, however, and one of the most remarkable in any country, is that of Scutari, — a veritable City of the Dead. It is said that the Moslems prefer this spot for burial because they believe that eventually their people will be driven into Asia, and they do not like the thought of having their bodies left on the European shore when their nation finally crosses the Bosphorus.

The cypresses in this cemetery are magnificent; indeed, wherever they grow in the East they are majestic and grand. One can but admire the exquisite contrast which the dark, massive pyramidal form of this tree affords to the blue of the sky and the water, to the fresher verdure of the hills, and to the dazzling whiteness of the minarets, to whose heights it seems to aspire. The growth of the cypresses of Scutari is wondrously rapid and luxuriant; and as the cemetery is several miles long, and each grave has a tree, the effect of the cypress forest upon this hill above the Bosphorus is unique and impressive.

There are broad avenues through this cemetery where millions have been interred since the Mussulman conquest of Constantinople. The quarries of the Marmora, which have already furnished countless stones for the graves,

seem to be inexhaustible, and sufficient to afford grave-stones for the entire human race. Not infrequently one sees the stonecutter carving inscriptions on the columns, many of which are crowned by a coloured fez, which has largely replaced the folded turban of former days. The stones which mark the graves of women are carved in relief, and the usual designs represent the leaves and fruit of the grape-vine or the flower of the lotus. At the foot of these columns a basin-like stone holds flowers, perfumes, and milk, and often serves to feed the birds, which are here in vast numbers and are an unending delight.

Occasional *turbehs*, or sepulchral kiosks, indicate the graves of families of importance; and in the older part of the cemetery many of the columns are leaning, and some of them are fallen. There are also less agreeable sights, where graves have been disturbed and reveal skulls and other bones, some of which gleam like polished ivory.

In the modern portions of this great burial-place the whole appearance of things is rapidly changing. There are flower-patches gay with blossoms and other indications that the same spirit which has discarded the *feridjé* and dressed the Turks in frock-coats is also revolutionizing the appearance of their cemeteries.

The indifference of the Mohammedans to death is but the natural result of the teaching of the Koran, which is pure fatalism, and declares that the hour of death is imprinted on the forehead of every human being in invisible letters. The common people spit before speaking of death; but in polite society whenever it is mentioned it is prefaced by "Far be it from you," or some other equally courteous expression.

As death approaches, the Moslem is perfectly calm, and his friends rarely show any deep emotion. They gather about his couch; and if he can speak he exchanges forgiveness with them for anything that may have disturbed

their harmony during life. The dying man frequently makes charitable donations, gives freedom to slaves, and bestows gifts on his friends; but there are no religious ceremonies. No priest is called, or any sacrament administered; and the only prayers are those repeated by the friends present to ward off the evil spirits that are supposed especially to frequent such scenes.

When death actually takes place, a short time is devoted to the wailing of women, who tear their hair, beat their breasts, and otherwise manifest their grief; but attention is soon fixed upon preparing for the burial, which occurs as speedily as possible.

When the departed is a person of consequence, the muezzin chants an announcement of death from the minaret, and friends are at once summoned to the funeral.

Every detail in the treatment of the corpse is regulated by religion and custom. The formalities are wearisome, and appear unimportant and even puerile to any but a Moslem, but are all symbolical of something that is of vital importance in his eyes. Everything is done with great care and gentleness, lest those who perform these duties should incur the curse of the dead. The tedious ablutions being ended, the remaining ceremonies are thus described by the author of "The People of Turkey":—

"The *tabout*, or coffin, is then brought in and placed beside the stretcher, both of coarse deal, put together with the rudest workmanship. Before laying the body in the coffin, a piece of new calico double its size is brought. A strip about two inches in width is torn off the edge, and divided into three pieces, which are placed upon three long scarves laid across the shell. The calico, serving as a shroud, is next stretched in the coffin, and a thousand and one drachms of cotton, with which to envelop the corpse, are placed upon it. Some of this cotton is used to stop the issues of the body, and is put under the arm-pits and between the fingers and toes. The body is then dressed in a

sleeveless shirt, called *kaflet*, and gently placed in the coffin. Pepper is sifted on the eyes, and a saline powder on the face, to preserve from untimely decay; rose-water is then sprinkled on the face, which is finally enveloped in the remainder of the cotton. The shroud is then drawn over and secured by the three strips of calico, — one tied round the head, the other round the waist, and the third round the feet, — and the coffin is closed down. When all is ready, the guests are admitted, and the Imam, or priest, turning round, asks the crowd: ‘O congregation! what do you consider the life of this man to have been?’ ‘Good,’ is the invariable response. ‘Then give *helal*, forgiveness, to him.’

“The coffin, covered with shawls and carrying at the head the turban or fez of the deceased hung on a peg, is then borne on the shoulders of four or more individuals, who are constantly relieved by others; and the funeral procession, composed exclusively of men, headed by the Imam and Hodjas, slowly winds its way in silence through the streets to the mosque where the funeral service is to be read. The coffin is deposited on a slab of marble, and a short *Namaz*, or prayer, called *Mihit Namaz*, is performed by the congregation standing. This concluded, the procession resumes its way to the burial-ground, where the coffin is deposited by the side of the grave, which for a man is dug to the height of the waist, for a woman up to her shoulder. A small clod of earth left at one end of the excavation, in the direction of the *Kibla*, takes the place of a pillow. The coffin is then uncovered, and the body gently lifted out of it by the ends of the three scarves, previously placed under it, and lowered into its last resting-place. A short prayer is then recited, a plank or two laid at a little distance above the body, and the grave is filled up. At this stage all the congregation withdraw, and the Imam is left alone by the side of the grave, where he is believed to enter into mysterious communication with the spirit of the departed, who is supposed to answer all the questions on his creed which his priest puts to him. He is prompted in these answers by two spirits, one good and one evil, who are believed to take their places by his side.



Should he have been an indifferent follower of the Prophet, and forbidden to enter Paradise, the evil spirit forces him to deny the only true God, and make a profession unto himself. A terrible battle is supposed to ensue in the darkness of the grave between the good and evil spirits called *Vanqueur* and *Veniqueur*. The evil being is supposed to be of immense size, his upper lip touching heaven, and his lower, earth; and he holds in his hand a huge iron cudgel. The good angel spares not his blows upon the corpse and the evil spirit, until the latter, beaten and disabled, abandons his prey, who by Allah's mercy is finally accepted within the fold of the true believers. This scene, however, is revealed to none by the Imam, and remains a secret between Allah, the departed, and himself. I have questioned several Mohammedans of different classes about this superstition, and they all appear to believe in it implicitly. Most credulous are the women, who embellish the tale with Oriental exaggeration and wonderful fancies that pass description."

The funerals of women are conducted in much the same manner as those of men, the chief difference being that a female head-dress takes the place of the fez on the coffin.

The hasty burial of the Moslems has in times of epidemics caused the interment of people who were still alive; but when the knowledge of this is revealed to the Moslem, he calmly attributes it to the fierceness of the struggle with evil spirits after burial.

Naturally the absolute fatalism of their religion makes the followers of the Prophet careless of the laws of health, and few of them receive any adequate medical attendance when ill. They have no curiosity as to the nature of diseases and their remedies, and post-mortem examinations are unknown.

It is considered so sinful for parents to mourn for their children that the Moslem mothers bravely endeavour to conceal their grief, — all the more that they are taught that if they mourn unreasonably their children will be driven



out of Paradise, condemned to wander about weeping and wailing as their parents do. In regard to children whose parents die, the case is reversed. They must mourn all their days, and owe it as a sacred duty to pray continually for the happiness of their parents in Paradise.

It is usual to distribute a portion of the goods of the deceased among the poor; and on the third, seventh, and fortieth days after the funeral a certain cake made for the purpose is distributed to the poor and to the friends of the family, bread being added on the final day. It is believed that these observances gratify the departed who are in Paradise, and afford a slight alleviation to the sufferings of those who are in torment.

The Moslems wear no mourning, and make no essential change in their lives by reason of a death. Visits of condolence are made, however, and friends and relatives make a practice of saying prayers for the departed at regular and stated times. But the general sentiment is that whatever is must be,—that it is kismet, and calls for little surprise or regret.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### BIRTH, CIRCUMCISION, AND MARRIAGE CEREMONIES.

THE Turkish customs and ceremonies which attend the birth of a child are tiresome, and, from our point of view, even cruel to both mother and baby. There are almost no skilful medical attendants for such cases, and Nature is left to do its work, save for the assistance — frequently worse than none — of a class of midwives who are from a low caste, and have no scientific knowledge of their profession.

The baby, as soon as born, is dressed in a chemise and a quilted jacket. Other quilted pieces are wrapped around it, and the whole is closely bound with a swathe until the bundle is like a mummy. A silk cap, red in colour, and decorated with gold coins and a pearl tassel, is placed on the little head. As soon as possible, charms and amulets to ward off the influence of the evil eye are added to this curious apparel; these consist of verses from the Koran plaited in triangles and sewn in blue cloth, hands and horse-shoes made of blue glass, a bit of alum, and the inevitable head of garlic.

When all this has been done, as quickly as possible the child is placed in a quilted square of the richest material, with one corner made into a hood. Wrapped in this, with a red gauze veil thrown over the whole, it becomes quite unimportant; and an elaborate couch is prepared for the mother, who must be most uncomfortable in spite of the elegance of her surroundings.

The state bed is decorated with the most costly Oriental

embroideries, silks, and gauzes. Several long pillows, covered first with rich silks and again in exquisitely embroidered pillow-cases, are placed at the head and on one side of the bed. The sheets are of gauze worked with the finest gold thread. One or more coverlets heavily embroidered in silk, with pearls and precious stones occasionally added, and lined with exquisite gauze sheets, are thrown over the whole; and here the mother is placed to receive the visit of her husband first, and then, during some days, the calls of friends, bearing gifts and presenting their congratulations. Her head is enveloped in a red scarf, the charms against the evil eye are added, a stick with an onion on the end is placed in one corner of the room, and the husband is then admitted.

After wishing all happiness to his wife, the child is put into his arms, and he carries it behind the door, where either he or an Imam reads the proper prayer for the child. The father then shouts the name chosen for the child into its ear three times, and, giving it back to the mother, leaves the room.

For some days the mother is only allowed to drink a tea made from maidenhair fern, and to taste a sweet, sickening sherbet, composed of candied sugar and spices. Not a drop of water is permitted, and her room is constantly filled with friends who eat sweets, drink coffee, and smoke incessantly. Two days after the birth, old women, called *Musdadjis*, the official bearers of invitations to all ceremonies, are sent out with bottles of sherbet and invitations to a reception on the next day.

Great preparations are made for this entertainment. Dinners are prepared for the invited guests, and sherbet for the uninvited, as the house is open to all. The distinguished visitors arrive in groups, and send their servants before them, bearing gifts of baskets of sweets, very

tastefully arranged, and decorated with gauze and ribbons. Bands of music attend the prominent visitors as they ascend to the chamber of the mother and child. She kisses the hand of the older ladies, and they repeat a salutation which, being translated, is, "Wonderful! let it be long-lived and happy!"

Little attention is bestowed on the child, and that little seems to us of a questionable nature. The visitors look at it, ejaculate, "Naughty, ugly, dirty," and so on, and even spit on it. The Turkish women behave in this manner because there is always a suspicion about flattering and complimentary words; and if any evil occurs after such have been spoken, it is believed to result from the malice which the flatterer really felt while uttering her sweet-sounding phrases. Great fear is entertained lest the evil eye has been cast on the mother and child; and as soon as the guests depart, cloves are thrown into a brazier to determine whether this has occurred. If a clove bursts with the heat, alarm is at once taken, and measures to avert the evil are instituted. Hair from the heads of mother and child is burned for the fumigation of the unfortunate pair, while prayers and incantations are said over them, mingled with spittings and blowings, which are continued until a fit of yawning seizes the victims and indicates that the evil spell is overcome. If any one person is suspected of having given the *Nazar*, or evil influence, an old woman hangs about her, and obtains, if possible, a scrap of her dress, which is also burned in the room of the mother and child.

Of course this description is that of a birth ceremony in a wealthy Turkish family. Those of less means follow it as closely as possible; but in all classes there is a controlling idea that the mother and child must not be left alone, lest they should be possessed by the *Peris*; and when a poor woman is obliged to stay alone, a broom is



placed by the bed to guard her and her baby from these uncanny folk.

The next important ceremony is the bathing of the mother and child, which occurs on the third day with the poor, and on the eighth day with the rich. If this takes place at home, guests are invited, and an entertainment is served. If it occurs at a public bath, a carpet and bathing linen are sent there. This linen is richly embroidered and sown with pearls, and is frequently worth some hundreds of dollars.

The company go to the bath in procession; the midwife, carrying the child, leading the way. The mother, laying aside her garments, is wrapped in a silk scarf by the bath mistress, and with silver-embroidered pattens on her feet is led into the inner bath, the baby following. The little creature is first bathed with hot water, and vigorously scrubbed in spite of lusty cries of disapproval. This being done, the mother's ablutions are begun by throwing some keys into a basin of water, muttering prayers over it, and blowing into it three times. Pails of water are then thrown over her, she is assisted in washing her head, and is finally placed in a recumbent position on a central platform, with her head resting on a silver bowl.

The next operation is very tedious, and the friends of the lady surround her and endeavour to amuse her while her entire person is rubbed with a sort of salve made of spicy preparations and honey, which is thought to be very strength-giving. This remains on the lady about an hour, and is frequently tasted (!) by those near her, as it is considered good luck to get this *bonne bouche*. What remains is washed off, and the richly embroidered bathing-dress is put on, when the lady makes the tour of the bath and kisses the hands of the elderly ladies, who give her many good wishes. This bath ceremony occupies the greater



part of the day, and refreshments are frequently served to the guests. Much is made of this occasion, as it is only on the birth of a first child that these ceremonies are necessarily observed. With other births the parents can do as they choose.

One can but pity a Turkish baby so long as it is kept in its cradle, — a narrow wooden box on rockers, in which is a hard mattress and no pillow. Into this the child is so bound that the head alone can be moved. It is flat on the back, with the arms straight down by the sides, and the legs equally straight, with the toes turned in.

Fortunately this custom is dying out among the more intelligent Turks and Armenians, who have also used this method; but the lower classes persist in it, and thus continue to make their children bow-legged and accustomed to toe in when walking. While in the cradle babies are occasionally fed, and suck almost continually a bit of some sweet preparation tied in muslin.

But the most objectionable feature in the care of Turkish babies is the manner in which they are drugged with opium, poppy-heads, and other narcotics, by which they are constantly kept half asleep, and in place of a healthy cry make a sad little moan. They have no appearance of activity, and are rarely hungry. Naturally many maladies are induced by this treatment, all of which the Turkish mother attributes to the effect of the evil eye, and treats the child with amulets and prayers by old women and sheiks, who are believed to have a gift for healing. Little faith is placed in the advice of doctors, and their directions are not followed. If a child dies, it is fate, — “kismet.”

Death frequently occurs from over-eating in older children, and the weaning-time is a very critical period for a baby, as a basket containing all sorts of sweets and fruits is left at its disposal; and many of the distended

bowels and ungraceful figures of Oriental children are the result of improper feeding.

The important rite of circumcision is conducted with some strange customs. The boys are from four to ten years old at the time of the ceremony, and the poorer people watch for an occasion when the son of a wealthy man is to be circumcised, and beg that their sons may be allowed to join in the ceremonial. When this occurs in the Imperial Palace, the Sultan is not allowed to refuse any one; and it has frequently happened that the thousands who apply make an enormous demand upon the public treasury. Other rich men may decide what number they will benefit.

The *Sunnet Duhun*, as it is called, occupies a week. On Monday the boys first go to the bath, where their hair is plaited with gold threads, and hangs down the back until the moment for cutting it arrives. They are next provided with very rich clothing, their fezes being studded with gems. Dressed in all this finery, they are led from house to house by old women to invite their friends to the ceremonies of the week. The first two days are devoted to entertainments in the *selamlik*. The third and fourth days are principally spent in the *haremlık*, where there is music and dancing and much gaiety. The boys also ride through the town in procession, in the company of their *Hodjas*, or parish priests, the family barber, and friends, as well as bands of music. On returning to the chosen house, the fathers of the boys welcome them, assist them to dismount, at the same time announcing the gifts to be bestowed upon their sons. These may be lands or any other property that the father can afford. If any boy has no relative to give him a portion, the father of the chief boy endows him with some gift.

Meantime the women prepare beds in the *haremlık*, to which the boys are carried after the completion of the

ceremonial. On this day there are gay doings in both parts of the house; and at times the women all disappear, in order that the men may visit the boys. Many presents are given them as well as to the *Hodja* and barber, while the old women who announce to the mothers the completion of the ceremony also receive money.

Every effort is made to amuse the boys until they are taken home, and entertainments still proceed in the principal house. Hospitality is a virtue of the Turks, and on these occasions it is most liberally shown. They believe it to be a religious duty to provide thus for the sons of the poor.

There is great mortality among the children of the Turks. One preventive of this is the employment of wet nurses, who are a highly privileged class, and their own sons are foster-brothers of the adopted nursling; or if the child of the nurse is a girl, she is permitted to see her foster-brother freely, in spite of the rigid separation of the sexes under other circumstances.

The Armenian birth customs very much resemble those of the Turks, and have many superstitions connected with them; but instead of the broom to warn off evil spirits, the image of a saint is used, and the onion replaced by frequent sprinkling of holy water.

The Turkish wedding ceremonies are burdensome for every one concerned, and are in many respects childish and inconsequential; but with orthodox Mohammedans nothing of the strict custom may be omitted.

The bride and groom are usually mere children, not infrequently eleven and seventeen years old. The alliances are necessarily arranged by the parents or near relatives of these inexperienced youths. A party of the bridegroom's friends, which often includes his mother, visits the house of the bride; and she serves them with coffee, kisses hands, takes empty cups, and disappears.

From this slight opportunity for seeing the girl she must be described to the young man; and if he is favourably impressed, his friends proceed to arrange all the preliminaries of the marriage.

A rich trousseau is furnished for the bride by her family, but the bridegroom gives her a dowry. This is made necessary by the freedom with which he can divorce her. He has only to say, "Cover thy face; thy *nekyah* is in thy hands," and she must go. But fortunately he cannot control her property, and she can take with her all that she owns. If the husband has spoken in haste, he can take her back twice; but if he forgets himself the third time, she must be married to another man before she can return to him. This law is intended for a restraint upon the husbands who too easily declare a divorce. Its results are revolting. The husband hires a man to take his place for one night. He is usually old and of an inferior class. In the morning he leaves the woman, saying, "Thy liberty is thine; thou art no longer my wife." Instances have occurred, however, in which these hired husbands would not thus easily resign their positions, in which case the quick-tempered husband can do nothing.

Like most things in Turkey, divorce is a man's privilege alone. No matter what a woman has to endure, she cannot leave her husband without his full consent. Some of the cases for which Moslems divorce their wives are barrenness, poor health, and a quarrelsome disposition. This latter must naturally be very troublesome in a harem, and it is not unlikely that fear of a divorce is necessary for the maintenance of peace in these curiously organized households.

To return to the marriage ceremonies, the preliminaries being arranged and the amount of dowry agreed upon, the legal requirements of a marriage are fulfilled when a



*Hodja*, priest of the parish in which the bride lives, has assured the *Kadi*, judge, that the girl is free to marry, and obtains a license for a small sum.

The bridegroom's mother then visits the bride, and presents her with a piece of red silk and some sugar-plums. The silk is spread on the floor; and standing on it the bride kisses the hand of her mother-in-law, who in return blesses the bride. The red silk is later made into an under-garment. The bride bites one of the sugar-plums in two, and one half is taken by the mother-in-law to her son as a suggestion of the sweetness which the bride is to bring into his life.

The next step is taken by the *Imam*, a priest of higher rank than the *Hodja*, who goes to the door of the *haremlık* with a company of the friends of the contracting parties. The bride, standing behind the door, is asked three times if she consents to marry the bridegroom, and her three replies are heard by the witnesses. The *Hodja* then announces the amount of the dowry which the bridegroom has promised, and calls on those present three times to witness the contract, after which this ceremony is concluded with a short prayer. The witnesses then offer their congratulations in these words, "May Allah grant harmony between their two stars!"

Thus is the betrothal completed, and the couple most interested in it cannot see each other until after the wedding festivities have been held, which may be deferred for years even, during which time no communication is permitted between the affianced pair. It is not usual, however, for many weeks to elapse between the end of the betrothal and the wedding.

The trousseau of a wealthy bride is rich and costly. It includes many sets of bedding, each one having two mattresses, two coverlets, which are richly embroidered, and covers for the bolsters. Besides these there are a



great number of dinner-trays with services, many being of sterling silver. The kitchen utensils are of copper, and very numerous. There must also be furniture for two rooms, covered with gold-embroidered stuffs, as well as a collection of curtains and rugs, and a handsome brazier.

The large wardrobe of the trousseau includes some costly articles, such as fur jackets, valuable shawls, expensive gowns and cloaks, embroidered slippers and handkerchiefs, parasols, gloves, and many European articles which have recently come into use by Turkish ladies.

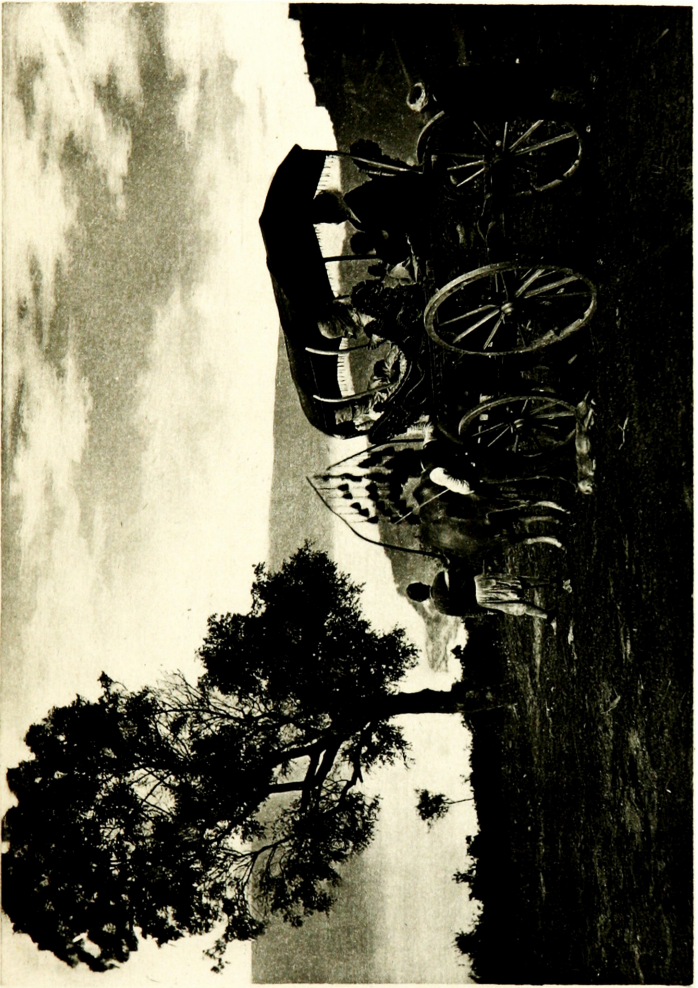
The *Duhun*, or wedding ceremony, occupies a week, and is very expensive. Eight days before it begins the bridegroom sends to the home of the bride, with great pomp and ceremony, certain gifts which he must provide, among which is the wedding dress. In very recent years this part of the programme is varied in some instances; the bridegroom presents a certain sum to the bride, and she purchases such things as he should give her.

The wedding customs are slightly varied in different provinces, while Armenian, Greek, and Bulgarian marriages are conducted according to their several religions and traditions; but Turkish weddings in Constantinople are essentially alike, and such as are here described.

The actual festivities begin on Monday; and one of the most important matters is the sending of the trousseau to the home of the bridegroom. Many relatives and friends gather at the bride's house for this purpose, and the affair is most carefully conducted. The trousseau is carried by *hammals*, porters, who are paid a sum of money, and each receive an embroidered handkerchief from the bridegroom's mother. The trousseau being delivered to this lady, or to some one in authority, a party of the bride's friends soon arrive for the purpose of arranging the rooms assigned to the bride.



*Turkish Ladies in Carriage.*







Being first served with coffee and sweets, they proceed to fasten cords along the walls of the bridal chamber, on which they hang the most important and costly articles of dress, as well as the prayer carpet and furred garments. Above these, on still other cords, the linen and lesser articles are suspended. All being disposed to the best advantage, garlands of artificial flowers are hung above the rows of cords. An alcove is reserved for jewels and other precious objects, which are placed beneath glass shades.

The bride's corner is converted into a bower by means of artificial vines and blossoms made of crape and silk. One of these bridal rooms, which it requires many hours to arrange, presents a gorgeous appearance. Rich stuffs, gold and silver embroidery, and other beautiful objects are so skilfully mingled as to produce an effect of which a magician might be proud.

This most important room completed, a second is arranged with the furniture intended for it; and in a third apartment or hall all the bedding — sometimes as many as fifty sets — is spread on cases, and is imposing in its rich silk, its embroidery, and its beautiful cotton stuffs. Beside this the kitchen utensils are displayed. Even the dust-pans are beautiful, made of walnut-wood inlaid with silver. Many articles are inlaid with mother-of-pearl; and the candelabra, stools, trays, and various objects in ivory and crystal are in striking contrast with the brilliant rich colouring of the copper kitchen furnishings.

On Tuesday the bridegroom is called on for the expenses of the bride's bath, which is conducted with great ceremony and care. On this day she must wear borrowed garments, the reason for which I cannot learn. Before leaving the bath the bride passes three times around the centre platform, and kisses the hands of all the guests.

Wednesday is an important day, as the lady friends of the bridegroom then visit the bride. They are conducted upstairs to a separate apartment from that occupied by the friends of the bride, and the two parties do not meet. Bitter coffee and cigarettes are first in order, after which sweet coffee is brought, and the bride is led into the room by two *hanoums*, — women of importance who have been married but once. She first kisses the hand of her mother-in-law, and then that of each visitor present, after which she sits a brief time beside her new mother while they exchange bits of masticated sugar, which symbolizes the harmony in which they intend to live with each other.

Dancing-girls and musicians entertain the two assemblies of guests by turn, and each visitor bestows small pieces of money on them. When the friends of the groom are about to leave, the bride is taken to the door; and as the guests pass out, they shower her with small coins. Great freedom is allowed to children, beggars, and all sorts of street-venders on the occasion of a wedding; and there is a serious scramble by these people for the coins, as they are believed to bring good luck to those who secure them.

A general invitation is given to the Kena ceremony — or the application of the henna — which occurs on Wednesday evening, although it more especially concerns the maiden friends of the bride. When the proper hour arrives, the garden is illuminated, and a procession is led by the bride and the dancing-girls. Each person carries a taper, which lights up her jewels and the colours of her costume as well as the flowers of the garden; and when this is extensive and fine, the whole effect is indescribably weird and unusual, as the procession winds in and out of the various paths to the music of the castanets and a wild, semi-barbaric sort of singing.

Towards morning the henna mixture is made ready;

and the bride, without her wedding clothes, enters a room where her mother-in-law awaits her. She shades her eyes with her left arm, and is seated in the centre of the apartment. Her right hand is covered with a scarf, and then plastered with henna, on which the mother-in-law first sticks a gold coin, and all present follow her example. This ceremony is repeated with the left hand, and the feet are also stained with henna. While the henna is imparting its dye, a most immodest and revolting dance is performed, accompanied with indecent songs and gestures.

The most solemn and impressive of all the wedding ceremonies is the girding of the bride by her father, which occurs just before her leaving home, and is witnessed by her mother and sisters, who, as well as the father, are usually in tears. The bride falls at her father's feet, which she kisses. She also kisses his hands; while he raises her, embraces her, and puts on her the bridal girdle, while giving her his parental advice and his blessing.

The hour on Friday at which the friends of the bridegroom conduct the bride to his house varies from early morning to late afternoon, but he does not see her until evening. He goes to the mosque to pray; and the Imam accompanies him home, where a short prayer is said, to which the guests all cry, "Amin, Amin!" The much-tried bridegroom is then pushed into his house amid a shower of blows; and the company, being once more refreshed at his cost, at length leaves his house in peace for a few hours.

As the bridegroom ascends the stairs, he finds in the way a bowl of water, which he kicks over. He is then met by the *Koulavouz*, who leads him to the bridal apartment, where the bride receives him by rising and kissing his hand. Her veil is then removed, and spread on the floor. The husband kneels on it, and recites a prayer, while the

wife stands on its border behind him. They then sit down side by side; and the old lady puts their heads together and holds a mirror before them, that they may thus take their first good look at each other, after which they are served with coffee and left alone.

A very curious feature of these ceremonies is now in order. The bridal supper cannot be served until the husband has induced the bride to speak to him; and she has been advised by her married friends to keep silence as long as possible. This situation is most tantalizing to the husband, as he can assume no control over his wife until she replies to his questions. When at length he succeeds in obtaining a few words from her, he makes a signal for the supper to be served, and, having eaten together, the poor bride is permitted to lay aside her wedding finery, and is left alone with her husband.

But, alas! this is not all. The tiresome ceremonies which have now continued five days must continue two more. On Saturday great crowds of women — some with invitations and many without — go to gaze at the bride, who is again arrayed in all her splendour; for the wedding dress is embroidered in pearls and gold, and costs several hundreds of dollars. Innumerable gifts are made, and various childish and monotonous amusements are introduced. Conversation is accompanied by continual smoking, coffee and sherbet drinking, while immodest dancing and obscene remarks are not infrequent. The vast expense of weddings in rich families is increased by the fact that the entertainments proceed in the houses of both bride and groom; and the cost taxes the family revenues for years.

When the young couple belong to the highest circles, the bride is frequently escorted to her new home by a procession of mounted soldiers, officials of rank, and numerous friends. The carriage of the bride is followed



by others filled with her relatives and other ladies. I have seen such a procession that was really imposing. It was led by several companies of soldiers splendidly mounted and finely dressed. The musicians were also riding fine horses, and were followed by still other military and civil officials.

There were three scarlet and gold state carriages that were as effective as those that make the treasures of many European museums. Each of these was drawn by four spirited horses, while the coachman and eunuch on the box, and the two footmen on the rack behind were in scarlet and gold uniforms, the two latter with powdered wigs and white silk hose. Many other elegant carriages filled with ladies followed, and the whole cortège was extremely brilliant.

When the bride is thus escorted to her future home, her husband meets her at the door, gives her his arm, and conducts her to the bridal bower, before which they contend as to which shall first be seated. Each endeavours to step on the foot of the other, and the successful one is thought to have the right of supremacy and decision in such matters as mutually concern them.

Possibly marriages of choice or romantic marriages occur among the Turks; but they are rare, and the contrary is more often true, while unsuitable matches for purely selfish motives are constantly made. Not infrequently a Turk marries a deformed or disagreeable wife who can bring him rank or fortune, knowing that he may have three other wives who are more to his taste, and as many odalisks as he can support. It is readily seen that so long as plural wives and harems exist, the women of Turkey must remain in a pitiable and degraded condition, the essential misery of which is but little affected by the changes they have been permitted to make in matters of dress and a few unimportant customs.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### SUPERSTITIONS, DERVISHES, RAMADAN, AND FATALISM.

IT is frequently said that no one is entirely free from superstition. One person will not sit at table with thirteen, another will begin no journey or other matter of importance on Friday, and many are certain of some "bad luck" if they happen to see a new moon over the left shoulder. These common and frivolous superstitions, however, seem to have no real effect on the lives of those who cherish them, any more than does the drawing on of the left stocking before the right, which some sensible people esteem to be a grave matter.

Turkish superstitions are not so lightly considered. They are far reaching in their effects, and not a few human beings are permitted to die from curable maladies because the friends of the patient, and even the patient himself, believe that the illness is caused by witchery. The most simple and natural acts of one's life are thought to be concerned with the supernatural. Plain and simple reasons for what happens are almost entirely ignored; while magicians, spirits, the power of the evil eye, and similar explanations are given for all the ordinary occurrences of life. These conditions are rendered as bad as possible by the fact that no reasonable methods are followed for the removal of evil influences and the cure of the sufferers. The incantations and villainous doses of quack-seers are the only recognized cures, and these seers are frequently disgusting old women who should be excluded from all communication with human beings.

Certain localities are believed to be haunted by such armies of ghosts, vampires, Peris, and other frightful spirits, that they are shunned if possible; or if they must be visited, it is done with fear, with incantations against the evil influences, and with all possible haste. The many superstitions which cluster around Mount Olympus belong of right to the Greeks; but the Turks are singularly ready to adopt the superstitions of other nations, while carefully cherishing their own.

The deserted villages around Olympus are believed to be inhabited by the ghosts of the Klephts, which can never be laid to rest until their wrongs are avenged. Annually on the day of the patron saint of this region a pilgrimage is made; and the descendants of the Klephts, from the oldest to the youngest, are brought here to offer such prayers as shall calm the disturbed spirits of the dead, while they also keep alive the remembrance of their wrongs and the desire to avenge them.

Turkish legends and poems are full of the most fearful tales of horrid spectres, of which the vampire — *Vrykolakas* — is the most repulsive and frightful. The Greeks have an intense fear that their dead relatives may become vampires. They visit their graves to judge whether they rest in peace or not; and if a body does not quickly decompose, they use means to calm the unhappy spirit.

To combat all these dreaded influences, the Turk has recourse to his amulets and prayers; while his neighbour, the equally superstitious Christian, appeals to Christ, to the Virgin, and clasps his cross and other images, which he believes to be effective in dispelling the presence and destroying the power of these uncanny beings.

Happily everything has its opposite, and the Turks also believe that good and benevolent powers exist among the throngs of supernatural beings who surround them. To

these they look for cures and for the alleviation of many ills. Certain mineral baths which cure some maladies are thought to do this through the aid of the beneficent and invisible beings who haunt their waters. In short, each precinct, each fountain, each bath, as well as each grave, has its especial genii.

The belief in magic is so sincere that all who have any important end to attain endeavour to add some charm to their other methods of accomplishing what they desire; and all misfortunes, estrangements, and worries are promptly attributed to spells, that of the evil eye which has been cast upon the sufferer being most frequently regarded as the untoward influence. The result is readily seen. These people live in continual torment through the fear of magic.

The throwing of the *buyu boghcha* is an almost universal custom. This is made up of earth, charcoal, hair, human bones, and some bit of the clothing of the intended victim, all tied in a rag. If it is desired that the victim shall die, this bundle represents his heart, and forty-one needles are thrust into it. High and low resort to the *buyu boghcha* alike; and it is believed to destroy or restore love, according to the wish with which it is thrown. It is said that after Sultan Abdul-Aziz was removed from his palace an almost countless number of these bundles was found in his apartments. Many were also found in the rooms of Sultan Abdul-Medjid. The Valideh Sultana, the favourites of the Sultan, the viziers, the chief of the eunuchs, and the numerous women of the harem, all try this means of obtaining or strengthening their hold upon the Padishah, who believes in the magical power of this spell, and lives in constant dread of it.

The antidotes against the evil eye are numerous, many of them being simple and harmless, such as blue glass, turquoises, pearls, alum, wild thyme, bloodstone, carne-

lian, written amulets, a certain gland from the neck of an ass, hares' heads, terebinth, garlic, ostrich eggs, and many other small objects which can be worn constantly.

The cures for those who have fallen victims to the unfriendly glance are equally varied, and some of them are extremely disagreeable. Sprinkling with holy water, fumigating with the smoke of the Easter Palms, and wearing sacred amulets are the chief remedies employed by the Christians; but the more ignorant of the various superstitious peoples of Turkey employ many curious spells against the *Nazar*. Six grains of salt are put on each eye of the victim, and then burned with curses. Six pieces of charcoal are put in a green vessel, and water poured over them while making the sign of the cross. A part of this water the patient drinks, bathes his face and hands in the remainder, and then throws it on the ground. Cloves are frequently placed on live coals in order to detect the presence of the evil eye; and if any explode, the *Nazar* is surely present, and must be exorcised. Among a certain class of very ignorant people, it is customary to string the heads of forty small fish on a certain day in February and hang them up to dry. Whenever a child is thought to be the victim of the evil eye, these fish-heads are soaked, and the poor sufferer is made to drink of the nauseous and disgusting fluid.

A full account of the preventives and antidotes employed against the malign influences of magic and of supernatural beings would require a volume; and in the use of these, astrologers, fortune-tellers, and dream-readers are constantly consulted. One obvious effect of this widely spread and deeply rooted superstition is to necessitate the greatest caution in expressing praise or censure of any person or thing. If you admire beauty, you are thought to envy it, and it follows that you will endeavour to destroy it. If you praise an object, fear is at once excited lest it



should be spirited away, and a thousand innocent words and glances are misinterpreted through the influence of this omnipresent superstition. Dark-eyed people are thought to be less dangerous than those with gray or blue eyes, and those with red hair are always suspected of witchcraft.

Certain remedies are thought to be necessary at certain seasons, such as blood-letting in the spring, when the gypsies sell living vipers to be used medicinally, the exact manner of their use being unknown to me. Freshly killed frogs and birds are used as a sort of poultice to draw out pain; and many curiously ineffective means are relied on for driving away vermin, with a tenacity of faith worthy of a better cause. The priests sell papers on which sentences are written, and these are nailed to the walls of the infested houses; or on a certain day of the year copper pans are beaten all over the house, while serpents, scorpions, and all small vermin are vociferously warned to flee.

One very curious feature of these superstitious customs is the way in which Mohammedans and Christians, who are so at variance in other matters, are agreed in these practices. It is not unusual for these widely differing sects to visit the sacred places of their religious opponents, especially when these shrines are noted for their curative effects. Turkish children are taken to Armenian churches to be healed by the prayers of Armenian priests, and Christian invalids return these compliments by being blown upon, and even spat upon by *Hodjas*. I have heard of cases in which Christians have taken their invalids to the dervishes for cures, just as the Moslems take their afflicted ones.

So great is the belief in dreams that the most important transactions are controlled by them. The young girl believes that happy dreams foretell her future bliss. Men



of far-reaching ambitions are encouraged or depressed by dreams. Marriages are broken off by reason of unfavourable dreams, and alliances that had never been suggested are brought about by more propitious visions. Indeed the fate of a man, and of all who are related to him, may easily be entirely changed by a dream; and wily people frequently make use of a dream, and through their own interpretation of it accomplish what would otherwise have been impossible.

When one attempts to understand the importance which the Turk attaches to omens, he soon comes to feel that this is absolutely the only vital thought to these followers of the Prophet. Every minute circumstance of life is an omen. No Turk will throw away his nail-parings, lest if he does so he shall be without nails at the resurrection! All minor accidents forebode disasters. To break a mirror or spill oil indicates misfortune close at hand; and from the lowest to the highest these omens are constantly in mind.

When the birth of Abdul-Aziz was announced to his father, the latter was in his bath, and was greatly disturbed that he should have heard such news when unclothed, since he interpreted the omen to mean that his son, a future Sultan, would leave his people and country naked. We must admit that this prediction was realized, even if we do not accept the omen; and where such numberless superstitions are cherished, such coincidences are naturally of frequent occurrence, — all the more as omens are differently read by different seers, and necessarily some one reader of mysteries will chance to foretell what will actually occur. Predictions, too, carry great weight with the Turks; and at certain important junctures prophets and astrologers are consulted, and if their predictions prove untrue, they are in great danger of losing their lives. For this reason they use a language

so cunningly mysterious that it may be construed to mean whatever may happen.

After the death of Abdul-Aziz an important prediction was made to the effect that seven sultans must rule, and most of them be slain, before the Turkish power could be firmly established. I am told that the present Sultan, Abdul-Hamid II., is in constant terror of cholera, as it has been predicted that he will die of this plague.

The absolute control which superstition exerts over Moslems, and their unquestioning faith in all sorts of supernatural powers, account in great measure for the popular acceptance of the dervishes to the neglect and even scorn of the *Ulema*, or orthodox clergy and learned men of Islam.

The *Ulema* embrace three principal orders,—the *Imams*, or Ministers of Religion; the *Muftis*, who expound the Sacred Law; and the *Kadis*, or *Mollahs*, who are judges. The Sheik-ul-Islam is the spiritual head of all Mohammedans, and even the Sultan cannot deprive him of his life or of his property. This exalted religious official wields immense power, and can under certain circumstances sentence the Sultan to deposition or death. In fact, neither of these penalties can be inflicted on a Sultan except under the authority of a *fetvah*, or order, from the Sheik-ul-Islam.

The dervishes, who are hated by the *Ulema*, are persistently supported by the people. Their power rests on their claim to inspiration. They are believed to be miracle-workers, and as such are sincerely venerated. Moreover, they scorn rich and titled men, and work in behalf of the masses. This fixes the affection of the people on them; and so powerful is Turkish superstition that even the wealthy and exalted, whom the dervish curses, often seek his approbation and blessing. The boldness of the dervishes in their reproofs and even

anathemas against all who offend them is proverbial; and their escape from the consequences of their words is owing to the fear of the masses, who believe in the supernatural powers of these fanatics. This belief is strengthened by their observation of the manner in which these men endure hardships, and the uneducated firmly believe that the good or evil wishes of a dervish will surely be realized. They have unbounded faith, too, in their healing powers; and the sick, especially children, are taken to the public services of the dervishes, week after week, in the confident hope of their cure; and even Christians, influenced by what they see and hear of the wonders performed by the dervishes, are occasionally known to put their sick under the treatment of these strangely repulsive beings.

The dervishes are very numerous, and are of various nationalities. There are many different orders among them, and individual dervishes vary in character as widely as it is possible for men to do. There are those of broad culture and enlightened views who cherish naught but good-will towards humanity. Others are men of the most brutal and sensual depravity, which proclaims itself in foul abuse of others and in vicious cunning, while their lives are an absolute contradiction of the asceticism which they profess. The wandering dervishes roam through all Mohammedan countries, and are skilful in arousing the passions of the people in times of war or of political excitement. Many of them join the moving armies, and play upon the religious feeling of both officers and soldiers by every argument at their command. Many instances can be given in which some one dervish of this class has exerted an almost superhuman influence in arousing the Moslem hatred of Christians, and initiating the most frightful persecutions.

The three important brotherhoods among the dervishes

are the *Mevlevi*, or whirling dervishes; the *Rifa'i*, or howling dervishes, and the *Bektashis*. The last are very numerous, and deem themselves the most important religious sect of the whole world, on account of the miraculous manner of their founding by Hadji Bektash, the same holy man who blessed the Janissaries after their institution by Sultan Orchan, and gave them their name, — *Yeni cheri*, “the new troop.” Most of the Janissaries became Bektashis, and combined the spirit of the monk with the profession of the soldier in such wise as to render them a most formidable body. They have been called the “Knights Templars of Islam.”

Strictly orthodox Moslems gradually came to regard the Bektashis with the same disapproval that they felt for the Janissaries; and after the extinction of the soldiers a persecution of the monks was inaugurated, which has been especially cruel in Albania, where the Bektashis were numerous and popular. One of the chief offences of these dervishes, in the eyes of strict Mohammedans, is the manner in which their wives are permitted to dispense with the customs of concealment, so vitally important to the true followers of the Prophet.

There is much to approve and even to admire in the creed and rules of the Bektashi order; but the forgetfulness of these rules manifested in the lives of these men makes it impossible to believe in any essential self-dedication to a religious life, such as is implied in the solemn words of their Sheik when he receives them into the brotherhood. He puts a stone in the girdle of the new brother, which he withdraws and replaces seven times, saying, “I tie up greediness and unbind generosity; I tie up anger and unbind meekness; I tie up ignorance and unbind the fear of God; I tie up passion and unbind the love of God; I tie up the devilish and unbind the divine.”



Mohammedan customs vary but little in the countries where the religion of the Prophet is that of the government. Friday is the Sunday of the Moslems, but is not observed with the strictness with which Christians keep their Sabbath. Moslem men go to the mosque for prayer, and there is a part of the mosque to which women may go; but except in the season of Ramadan but few women frequent the mosques, and these are principally so old that their comings and goings occasion no comment.

The fast of Ramadan is a very important feature of the religious duty of the Moslem. It is a season of fasting by day and feasting by night. The poorest and hardest-working classes are most faithful in their observance of it; and it tells severely on them, for they labor as hard as when not fasting, and can eat nothing until the sunset gun is fired. Among the better classes the fast is more strictly observed by the women than by the men; in fact, I am told that while the officials and gentlemen of Turkey show an outward respect to Ramadan, on account of the hold it has upon the masses, they care but little for it personally. There are still, however, many good Moslems who devote a large part of this month to the study of the Koran and to good works, to hospitality and almsgiving, and to the cultivation of peace and charity with all men. The author of "The People of Turkey" gives the following account of some Ramadan customs:—

"Last year I went dressed as a Turkish lady to the evening prayer during the fast. It was a strange sight to me, and the excitement was increased by the knowledge of the unpleasant consequences that would follow the penetration of my disguise. The Turkish women seemed out of place there; their levity contrasted markedly with the grave bearing of the men on the other side of the partition. The view I thus obtained of the beauti-



ful mosque of Sultan Ahmet was singularly impressive. The *Ulema* in their green and white turbans and graceful robes, absorbed in the performance of their religious duties; officers in bright uniforms, and civilians in red fez and black coat, side by side with wild-looking dervishes, and the common people in the varied and picturesque costumes of the different nations, — all knelt in rows upon the soft carpets, or went through the various postures of that religion before which all men are equal. Not a whisper disturbed the clear, melodious voice of the old Hodja, as he pronounced the *Terravi* prayers, which the congregation took up in chorus, now prostrating their faces on the ground, now slowly rising; you could fancy it a green cornfield, studded with poppies, billowing under the breeze. Above were the numberless lamps that shone in the stately dome. . . .

“I have often partaken of an *Iftar*, or Ramadan dinner. It is very curious to observe the physiognomy of the *Terriakis*, or great smokers and coffee-drinkers, who, as the moment of indulgence approaches, become restless and cross, now sighing for the firing of the gun that proclaims the fast at an end, now indulging in bad language to the people who gather round and tease them. As the sun approaches the horizon, a tray is brought in laden with all sorts of sweets, salads, salt-fish, Ramadan cakes, fruit and olives, contained in the tiniest coffee-saucers, together with goblets of delicious iced sherbet. When the gun is fired, every one utters a *Bismillah* and takes an olive, that fruit being considered five times more blessed than water to break the fast with. After the contents of the tray have been sparingly partaken of, dinner is announced, and all gather round the *sofra*; few, however, eat with appetite, or relish the dinner half so much as they do the cup of coffee and cigarettes that follow.

“During Ramadan night is turned into day, and the streets then remind one of carnival time in Catholic countries. The wealthy sit up all night, receiving and returning calls, giving evening parties, spending the time in a round of feasts and entertainments. At Stamboul, when the prayer of the *Terravi* — which is recited two hours after sunset — is over in the

mosque, all the people betake themselves to the esplanade of the Sulimanieh, and hundreds of elegant carriages containing Turkish beauties may be seen cutting their way through the dense crowd of promenaders. The bazaars are illuminated, and all the fruit and refreshment shops are open. Eating, drinking sherbet, and smoking is the order of the evening, besides a great amount of flirtation. I cannot say that there is much taste or refinement in this unusual but tacitly recognized passing intercourse. The ladies all appear in high spirits, and tolerate, and even seem amused by, the acts of gross impertinence to which they are subjected by male passers-by. Some of the fast men and *mauvais sujets* indulge in acts and language that would certainly cause the interference of the police in an orderly society. . . . The little respect paid to women in this indiscriminate *mêlée*, where the dignity of the Sultana was no more regarded than the modesty of the lowly pedestrian, struck me forcibly. It made the greater impression on me as it contrasted strongly with the respect paid to her under other circumstances.

“Three hours before dawn, drums are beaten and verses sung through the streets to warn the people to prepare for the *sahor*, or supper, after which an hour’s leisure is accorded for smoking and coffee-drinking, when the firing of a gun announces the moment for rinsing the mouth and sealing it against food until sunset. All business is put off by the wealthy during the day, which is filled up by sleep; while the poor go through the day’s work unrefreshed.”

Pilgrimages are not now considered by the Moslems so obligatory as they formerly were; and yet the assembling and departure of the pilgrims which occurs fifteen days before the beginning of Ramadan is one of the most interesting sights for the stranger in Constantinople. The great pilgrimage embraces visits to Damascus, Jerusalem, Mecca, and Medina, — the most sacred spots of the whole earth to the Mohammedan. Those who are willing to undergo the hardships, fatigues, and dangers of

this terrible journey receive certain aid from the government, in the way of free passes and certain other privileges. Returning, they must bear a special tattoo-mark on the arm and between the thumb and forefinger, which is the sign and seal of the faithful performance of this pilgrimage. We have not space for any adequate description of this journey, to which many lives are annually sacrificed.

If the religions of the world are examined, it is difficult to find one that has no hint of a belief in an inevitable destiny; but it has been left for the followers of Mohammed gradually to assume, teach, and act upon the principle that if fate — kismet — has ordained a thing, no human effort can avert it. The Prophet did not teach this doctrine in its present absolutism; for to-day, in Turkey, whatever occurs, from the gravest matter which affects the entire nation to the most insignificant detail in the life of the humblest individual, is due to kismet; and kismet alone is regarded as the cause of everything alike.

The demoralizing effect of this doctrine in personal life is easily apprehended. No one strives energetically to accomplish anything, no matter how capable he may be or how ambitious, because of this upas-tree of doctrine which forever hangs over him. He does nothing; he simply smokes, and waits to observe what his kismet will bring to him.

Taking a wider view, that which renders the individual of no account, works out the same result in the nation; and to this blind and absolute belief in kismet may be largely attributed the inefficiency and weakness of the descendants of the great Orchan, Mohammed II., and Suleiman the Magnificent, who, Moslems as they were, submitted to no adverse fate without bravely struggling against it.

The one endeavour of the absolute fatalist is to stifle all

emotion; to accept with equanimity both good and bad fortune; to attain to the full spirit of the word "Moslem," which may be translated "resigned;" and if he succeeds in his design, he becomes less even than the beasts, who strive to feed themselves rather than starve, and to protect their young rather than let them die by any untoward fate.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### EDUCATION IN CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE evil influences of the harem system are by no means exhausted in their effects upon the mothers, but are visited upon the children with a double severity. The influence that a mother should have over her children in leading them to all that is good and great is acknowledged by all civilized nations; but what can be expected from mothers who are as degraded as Turkish mothers?

In many directions these women are as childish and as much in need of guidance as the children themselves. Not infrequently the disobedience or misbehaviour of the child simply arouses the temper of the mother, and a brawl ensues; they strike, abuse, and even curse each other with great energy. And little boys learn at an early age to hold themselves superior to every living member of the opposite sex, their own mothers being singularly unimportant. In the presence of the father, and other men, among the better classes, children are quiet, and even unnaturally sedate; but at no other time are they under any restraint. Neither is there any proper method or system in the care bestowed on children. They have no regular hours for sleep, their physical cleanliness is much neglected, and they are dressed in the most slovenly and careless manner; while no wisdom is used in the regulation of their diet, and they are absolutely objects of pity, and fit subjects for diseases of all sorts. They are also under the worst of moral influ-



ences, constantly witnessing deceit and the exhibition of the most contemptible traits of character, while they listen to vulgar and disgusting conversation, nothing being withheld on account of their presence. Such is the life of children whose parents are opposed to all change, and object to the companionship and influence of Europeans.

In recent years, however, there have been instances in which the little girls in Turkish families have been given a slight education. They have been taught to use a needle, and to occupy themselves in certain feminine ways; but the Turks so fear a spirit of independence or insubordination in their daughters, that progress in this direction is discouragingly slow. Comparatively few Turkish girls are provided with European governesses, taught European languages, or given anything that merits the name of education.

The boys of the best Turkish families have been sent to study in Europe for some years, and are frequently fond of study and quick to acquire knowledge. But it also happens that these boys prefer the study of European life before that of the schools; and their acquaintance with ballet-dancers and other people who amuse them and help to spend the liberal supplies of money which they receive, is far more intimate than with the studies they are supposed to pursue.

Returning to Turkey, they are anything but useful men; for if they incline to be good Mohammedans, it is almost impossible for them to approve of such progressive movements as would benefit their country. If, on the other hand, they have essentially thrown off the Moslem religion, they have acquired nothing of serious value with which to replace it; they are simply sceptics,—or perhaps that word they so freely apply to Christians — *Giaour*, infidel — better expresses what they have become. Hav-

ing thus no principle or governing motive of their own, they are incapable of conferring benefits on others or of advancing the interests of their country and their people.

Within the present century attempts have been made to raise the standard of education in Turkey. No schools worth mentioning exist in country villages, but in Constantinople and in the chief cities of Turkey there are preparatory schools in which the elements of mathematics, geography, and the history of Turkey are taught. From these the pupils pass to a higher grade of schools, also preparatory, in which gratuitous instruction is given in such branches as shall fit them for the professions which they propose to follow. The courses in these schools require from three to five years of study, and are followed by the marine, artillery, and medical schools. There are also, at Constantinople, schools for teaching foreign languages to those whose employment in government offices demands such knowledge; others for the instruction of teachers for the various schools, for mechanical teaching, and certain other technical instruction.

But, alas! the wise plan of these institutions, originating with the sagacious Sultan Mahmoud and inaugurated by him with great difficulty, has never been carried out. The students are not properly disciplined, the professors are not fully equipped for their work, and there has been no systematic management of these schools; neither has their number been increased. They have not been introduced throughout the country; and, in fact, what is dignified by the name of the "Turkish System of Education" is a poor apology for anything that is known by so comprehensive a title.

The few schools which exist for Moslem girls labour under grave difficulties. The pupils, on their entrance to the school, are often engaged to be married, and have

so short a time for study that if they acquire a scanty knowledge of reading and writing it is most encouraging. It is certainly to their advantage to be taught sewing, crochet-work, and the like industries; and in cases where they are sent to school at an earlier age, they learn what seems like a vast store of wisdom to their female relatives who are in a state of absolute ignorance.

In 1868 those enlightened men Ali Pasha and Fouad Pasha determined to found a lyceum, in which the youths of all races and creeds should be educated together, with the aim of establishing more friendly relations between the different peoples who are subjects of the Sultan. It was a bold scheme and a wise one, but the antagonisms which it aroused were not easily overcome. In spite of the benefit which should have resulted from the teaching of the physical sciences, history, literature, and both classic and modern languages, the race prejudices and the different religions of the pupils constantly prevented the realization of the grand influences for which the founders of the Lyceum, its French Director, and his teachers had so enthusiastically hoped.

The Mohammedans wished the Koran to be read, and the fasts and feasts which it enjoins to be strictly observed. Naturally, the Jews and Christians could not agree about their food and other matters of vital importance to the former. Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, and Roman Catholics each had their special grievances, all of which were of great moment to each separate sect. The vexatious question as to what Day of Rest should be observed was a crucial matter, as well as that of the observance of festivals, both national and religious.

However, in spite of all this, the Lyceum held its own, had hundreds of students, and showed satisfactory results during the lives of its founders; but its success was never sufficient to warrant the fulfilment of the original idea,

which was to found like institutions in all the chief towns of Turkey.

The Mosque-Colleges, called *Medressés*, and supported by the Mosques, are for the special education of priests of all classes. We are told that Language and Theology are the branches taught; but to the Arab the word "Language" includes many things: poetry, rhetoric, grammar, and still other branches, may all be included in this one study of Language. Until something better can be established in Turkey, the *Medressés* are very important in their influence in that country; for not only the priests, but the scholars of all professions in modern times, have been instructed in these Mosque-Colleges.

As in every country of the world, so in Turkey, the Roman Catholics have established schools, which are conducted on their usual principle, and are chiefly directed to the religious instruction of their pupils rather than to the imparting of what is known as "book knowledge."

The Protestants, especially the Americans, have made a greater success in the two principal colleges — one for each sex — which they have founded at Constantinople.

In 1871 there was established here, by some American women, a High School for girls, which so prospered, and so clearly proved that there was a field for the broader education of women in Turkey, that in 1890 the "American College for Girls" was founded by Act of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where the young women of the Orient are offered opportunities for intellectual culture, and for the formation of a character symmetrical with high moral and intellectual standards.

The Corporation of the College is authorized to grant such testimonials and confer such honours and degrees as are conferred by the various institutions of learning in Massachusetts.



The college is located on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, and has a charming site. The first building which was erected here is called Bowker Hall, and was built in 1876; in 1882 Barton Hall was added. There are four acres in the grounds of the college, which are laid out with skill and taste, and command extensive views of the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora.

This college has all the departments necessary to such an institution; its social life is pleasant, and of great advantage to the girls who gather here, where teachers and pupils make a well-ordered family. The curriculum is extensive; and although the language of the college is English, the courses in languages are necessarily many, as the students represent eight or ten different nationalities, embracing Armenians, Bulgarians, Russians, Greeks, French, Germans, English, Americans, and Turks. Pupils come from great distances, — Russia, Roumania, Greece, and Macedonia, as well as the most distant parts of the Turkish Empire; while the attendance from Constantinople is always large.

In 1893-94 there were one hundred and seventy-three students, ninety-five of whom were boarding pupils and completely under the influences of the college. There are preparatory courses which admit girls at an early age, and even classes for children which are under the oversight of the college. Thus a little girl may be put under the training and influence of the college, and there grow into young womanhood.

A visit to this institution is a true pleasure, and Commencement Day is an important occasion; the large audience which gathers is of unusual interest by reason of the many nationalities of which it is composed. In June, 1894, there were present the representatives of the Sultan, of the Ministry of Public Instruction, and of various legations, as well as of Robert College, and of the



people of the highest position and widest influence in Constantinople.

The last-named college, founded by Christopher R. Robert of New York in 1863, has become an acknowledged and important factor in the life of the young men of Eastern Europe and the Turkish Empire. This college has raised the standard of national education in that part of the world, and has been largely instrumental in establishing the Bulgarian nationality.

More than three hundred students had graduated here in 1894, and men have gone out from Robert College who are filling posts of responsibility in all walks of life, — in Church and State, in the various professions, in the armies of their several countries, and in commercial and agricultural pursuits. About two thousand students, embracing sixteen nationalities, have attended Robert College; and a recent graduating class, which numbered twenty-two, delivered orations in six languages.

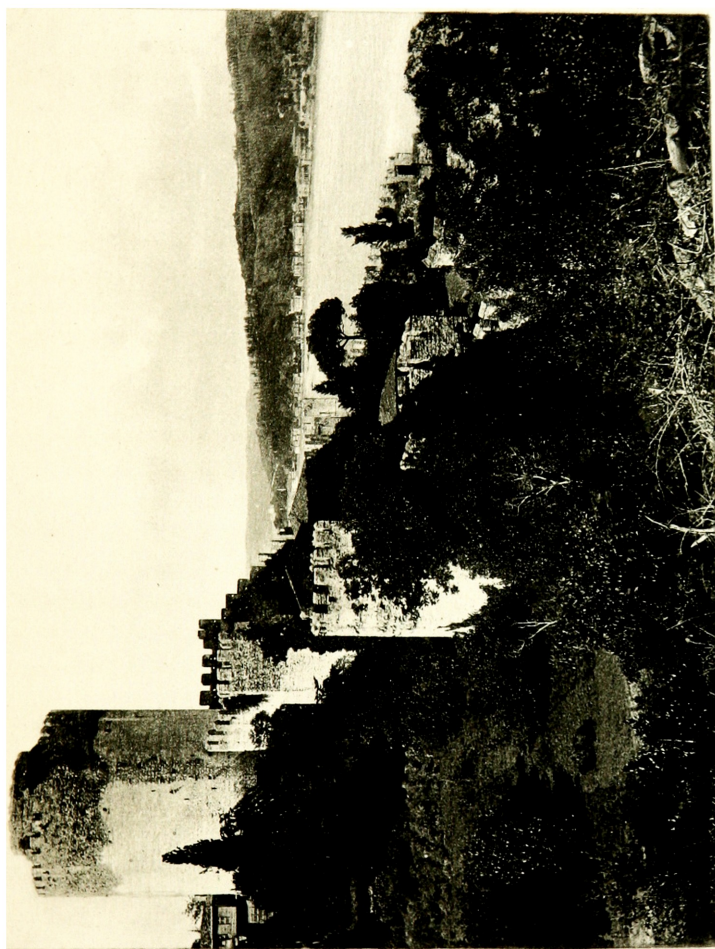
Robert College has as fine a site as any educational institution in the world. It is on the hill which overlooks the Castle of Roumelia, perhaps the most beautiful of the many beautiful sites on the Bosphorus. The report of the college for 1893 says: —

“The people of the East have responded heartily to this manifestation of American sympathy, and given the college their confidence and support, so that its influence has been constantly extending in full harmony with the educational development of the country. . . . The college has existed thirty years, and its reputation now rests upon the character of its graduates and the work they are doing in the world.”

If a boy enters the preparatory department and finishes the course, he is eight years in the college, — years in which his character is formed, his standards fixed, and his best characteristics and tastes developed. It is a



*Castle of Roumelia, built by Mohammed II.*







pleasure to hear, as I have several times done, the praises of their *Alma Mater* from young Bulgarians who have graduated from Robert College, and been long enough in the world to know, from their own experiences, what its privileges had done for them, — what was its full power and meaning in their lives.

That these American colleges have made a great impression on this part of the world, and that their moral power is felt, could scarcely be more clearly demonstrated than by the fact that an address by the President of Robert College, on the "Nature and Object of College Education," was published in full by the Armenian, Bulgarian, and Greek newspapers, as well as by the English.

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After repeated and somewhat protracted visits to Constantinople, my first and last thought of it is always a pleasure and a regret, — a pleasure from the recollection of the unequalled natural beauty of its position and surroundings, and a regret that no words can conjure up a satisfactory picture of these.

Not long ago a friend asked me, "What is the very pleasantest thing to be done in Constantinople?" I involuntarily answered, "To go out of it and all around it," as the delights of its suburbs and the excursions to be made in them presented themselves to my recollection. On one occasion, being detained there much longer than I had planned to stay, I had an opportunity to see what I had not found time for in previous visits; and since that experience the mention of this city calls up to me a vision of lovely landscapes, enchanting waters, beautiful gardens, splendid trees, luxurious vines, and exquisite flowers, which is so much more vivid than the vision of filthy streets, detestable wooden houses, and lean dogs that these latter are quite overshadowed.

He who sees but the usual "sights" of this strange city loses many delightful days which should be spent at the islands of the Marmora, and in visits to various points on both shores of the Bosphorus, which impress one again and again with the overflowing loveliness of all this neighborhood of villages and villas, bordering the loveliest of waters and overarched by the most charming of skies.

It has frequently been said that the Turk has always regarded himself as a pilgrim and stranger in Europe, and there are wise men who believe that the remaining days of his pilgrimage are few. However this may be, and whoever may succeed him, it is true that if any spot exists on earth where peace and good-will to men should reign, where the influences of Nature should develop all that is lovely and elevating to mankind, — poetry, art, and all the gentler virtues and graces of human life, — it is in and around this city of Constantine, which for nearly four centuries and a half has been the Home of the Sultans.

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